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# Stoneham, Massachusetts: A Shoe Town

Front and Back Cover:

**Central Square, ca. 1915.** Thomson and Thomson, photographers. S.P.N.E.A.

Opposite:

**Fitzgerald Tannery.** The child in the carriage-stroller is Ida Fitzgerald, daughter of tannery owner Michael Fitzgerald. Michael Fitzgerald was born in Ireland in 1844, and came to Stoneham in 1873. He purchased the Hurd Tannery and operated it until 1880 when it was destroyed by fire. He then rebuilt a series of tannery buildings in the same location and rented space to many small shoe manufacturing firms. S.H.S.

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Stoneham, Massachusetts, a shoe town.

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# Stoneham, Massachusetts: A Shoe Town

Landscape Research  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Stoneham Historical  
Commission  
1981

## Preface

The transformation of Stoneham's landscape during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries dramatically illustrates the changes in the region's economy as the industrial age matured. Factories and tanneries of the expanding shoe industry were constructed on land that had been, for years, agricultural. Workers' cottages and elaborate mansions appeared on the surrounding hills as workers and their employers invested their newly acquired capital. Stoneham — in contrast to many industrial communities — was primarily locally controlled and financed. Consequently, the community's industry and institutions were uniquely its own.

This publication brings together a variety of visual and written materials gathered from the community which record and interpret in great detail two specific aspects of the town's rich history. The study begins with an overview of the physical transition of Stoneham from an isolated settlement of Charlestown through its rise and decline as a shoemaking center. It then provides an investigation into the shoe industry — and the people who built up that enterprise — the shoe workers.

The first section by Carole Zellie is based on an extensive architectural survey which documented and photographed over 400 buildings. During the architectural survey, plans, maps, directories, historic photographs and local histories were used to develop a background narrative for the project. The results were partially put to use in preparing a Multiple Resource Nomination to the National Register fo Historic Places, which was submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission in 1979. Beyond the immediate use in preservation planning for Stoneham, the historical narrative was further developed to provide an account of the physical development of the town. Historic maps and photographs, manuscripts and other archival material held by the Stoneham Historical Society and other regional historical collections were fully examined.

The second section by Martha Coons uses the techniques of the "new social history" to trace the lives of the Stoneham shoe workers. Providing a necessary corrective to traditional histories which concentrate on presidents and captains of industry, a new generation of historians are reconstructing the experiences of ordinary working people who left few diaries, letters or other written records. For Stoneham, as for other industrial towns, the manuscripts of the federal censuses, tax rolls, and city directories trace men and women. Payrolls and other records of the early shoe enterprises show how the labor of entrepreneurs and craftsmen contributed to industrialization, while records left by labor unions and the unique Stoneham shoe cooperatives reveal the contours of a strong working-class culture.

The project is a lesson in the quality of scholarship and publication small organizations with limited resources can obtain through perseverance and imagination. Funding for this project included grants from two Federal agencies, a local non-profit institution, and contributions from over 50 private individuals and businessmen, as well as Town appropriations. It is important to seek support from every level in the community to insure the success of a project of this type.

It is hoped that this publication will be a source of enjoyment, and also an occasion for discovery and insight. The objective is not to further a particular point of view, but to heighten our awareness and appreciation of Stoneham.

Hugh A. Boyd

Chairman, Stoneham Historical Commission

As noted in captions, plans and photographs are from the following collections:

S.H.S. Stoneham Historical Society

M.C. Middlesex County Courthouse Plan Department

S.P.N.E.A. Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities

## Acknowledgements

The research and production of this publication are an important extension of the work by the Stoneham Historical Commission. What began four years ago with the formation of the Commission in an effort to save an historic engine house has broadened into an attempt to better understand and protect Stoneham's rich heritage. A project such as this is a complex and lengthy undertaking involving the labor and enthusiasm of many contributors, all of whom deserve appreciation.

Perhaps more than anyone else, Mrs. Helen Kinsley deserves credit for this project. As a local historian and past President of the Stoneham Historical Society, she has unselfishly shared her knowledge and research with many through the years. Mrs. Kinsley has provided valuable criticism for this publication and has located many sources of information which would not have otherwise been found. This book is dedicated to her.

Our sincere appreciation goes to those professionals whose research and creativity comprise this publication. Carole Zellie, of Landscape Research, was the architectural historian and principal author. She was responsible for much of the conceptualization and direction of the study. Her initial architectural survey and research of Stoneham and other New England communities provided the basis for the section of the book concerning the historical development of Stoneham. Martha Coons, a social historian, painstakingly researched the development of the shoe industry in Stoneham. Her efforts form the other major section of this book. Paul Faler, Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, helped to outline the research and reviewed the manuscripts on the shoe industry. Vicki Watt contributed photography and careful copywork of historic photographs to the publication.

Funding for this project was derived from a variety of sources. We are particularly indebted to these individuals who generously gave the project initial financial support: Hugh and Marjorie Boyd, John and Mary Lou Bracciotti, Richard and Janet Covino, Dr. John Danis, Steven DiTullio, Dr. John D'Orlando, Dorothy Downes, Miriam Dyson, Albert Finnegan, Frank Geremonte, Dr. Goldstein, Bea Halchick, Amy Henderson-Boyd, Robert Henderson, Carolyn and William Hoad, Charles Houghton, Elaine Klucken, Brian Maglione, Julia Malonson, David Mauriello, Dr. Henry McCarthy, Shirley Murray, August Niewenhous, Harold O'Melia, Dr. Peter Paicos, Michael Pinelli, Lillian Price, Marjorie Raymond, Robert Saitz, John Shaughnessy, Jean Silvestro, Dr. John Smallcomb, William Sorenson, Hazel Thorn, Kenneth Turino, Rosemary Vogt, Elizabeth Whelan and Simon Zaltman.

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Finally, appreciation is owed to past and present members of the Stoneham Historical Commission, who contributed their time and concern to this project. Each has participated in their own way: Elaine Basile-McKenzie, Danahy Bloome, Irene Geremonte Dempsey, Louise Finnegan, Joanne Harriman, Dale Merrill, August Niewenhous, Dr. Peter Paicos, Kenneth Turino, and Elizabeth Whelan.

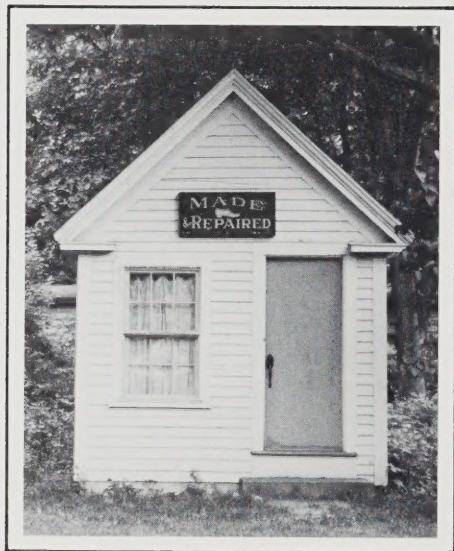
It only remains to thank the boards, committees and citizens of Stoneham, who we hope will be the principal beneficiaries of this publication.

H.A.B.

## Landscape Research Project Staff:

Carole Zellie, research and photography  
Martha Coons, research  
Paul Faler, research assistance  
John Tata, graphic design  
Vicki Watt, photography  
Howard Spergel, editorial assistance

Typesetting by Together Graphics



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# Section One: Growth and Change 1640-1915



## The Natural Landscape

Ralph, Richard and William Sprague, early Charlestown settlers, explored the forest surrounding Spot Pond near present-day Stoneham in 1628-29. They called the landscape "an uncouth wilderness, full of timber . . ." Another group exploring the area about the same time recorded that there "was little probability that the settlement would ever extend beyond the mountainous and rocky country."<sup>1</sup> Seventeenth century explorers were somewhat awed by the rugged topography of the land surrounding the Pond. This reaction is reflected in the records of later observers, including nineteenth century surveyors, land promoters, and conservationists.

The character of the natural landscape surrounding Stoneham was recorded in a well-documented trip by Governor Winthrop on February 7, 1632:

The Governor, Mr. Nowell, Mr. Eliot and others, went over Mistic River at Medford; and going N. and by E. among the rocks about two or three miles, they came to a very great pond, having in the midst an island of about one acre, and very thick with trees of pine and beech; and the pond had divers small rocks standing up here and there

in it, which they therefore called Spot Pond. They went all about it upon the ice. From thence (towards the N.W. about half a mile) they came to the top of a very high rock, beneath which (towards the N.) lies a goodly plain, part open land and part woody, from whence there is a fair prospect; but it being then close and rainy, they could see but a small distance. This place they call Cheese Rock, because when they went to eat somewhat they had only cheese (the Governors man forgetting for haste, to put up some bread.)  
...<sup>2</sup>

From Bear Hill, the highest point in the area at 320 feet above sea level, the Governor could see the many ridges, hills, and ponds created by the glacier. It was necessary to find the highest point of land to observe the extent of the area because of the thick growth of trees which covered the hilltops and surrounding areas. In 1634, William Wood included a description of Winthrop's visit in his **New England Prospect**, and included a map of the region. The map, probably drawn by Thomas Greaves, shows "Spott Pond" and its central island, Great Island.

Above:

**Rock Formation at Spot Pond. Photograph ca. 1885.** High water levels today obscure the rock formations which Governor Winthrop called "spots". S.H.S.

**View of Stoneham from Bear Hill, ca. 1915.** S.P.N.E.A. Thomson and Thomson, photographers.



## Geological Features

As part of its natural landscape, Stoneham has a number of important geological characteristics.

Stoneham's small hills, bowls and vales are part of the Boston Basin, an average of one hundred and sixty feet above sea level. The hills are composed of metamorphic quartzites, slates, and felsites. A great seam of white, finely crystalline magnesian limestone (dolomite) intersects Stoneham, creating the marble quarries from which the early settlers obtained lime, or "Stoneham Marble." Many of the stands of pine, hemlock, oak and hickory through which the first explorers wandered were perched on glacier-scratched hills littered with erratic boulders, the remnants of glacial deposits.

Between Ravine Road and Franklin Street, northeast of Spot Pond, there are great deposits of quartzites and metamorphic slates. Some of this strata is nearly vertical. Northwest of the belt of quartzite and slates near Main and Pond Streets and Doleful Pond are deposits of a greenish diorite, which appears as an eruptive flow.

One geologist observed that this deposit may be a remnant of what was once a great volcano. "Isolated

masses of felsite are of common occurrence in the diorite and granite areas, especially north, west, and southwest of Spot Pond, the ledge of felsite east of "Silver Mine" in Silver Mine Hill being a typical example,"<sup>3</sup> mentioned the author of a geological study of the Stoneham portion of Middlesex Fells in 1895. In the 1880s there were attempts to mine silver in this area, and early deeds refer to the mineral value of properties near Bear Hill. Reportedly, a proprietor sunk a 30-foot shaft and found "eighteen dollars in silver, four dollars in gold, and copper in large proportion."<sup>4</sup> Silver Mine Hill is situated near Stoneham's southern border, in Medford.

Stoneham lies entirely within the Mystic watershed. No major watercourses bisect Stoneham; the most prominent water feature at settlement and today is spring-fed Spot Pond, at 148 feet above sea level. Small ponds and swamp areas trapped between the granitic hills are drained by small brooks which join the Malden River at the east and the Aberjona River in Winchester at the west. The largest brook, Spot Pond Brook, merges with the Malden River and enters the ocean at Chelsea.

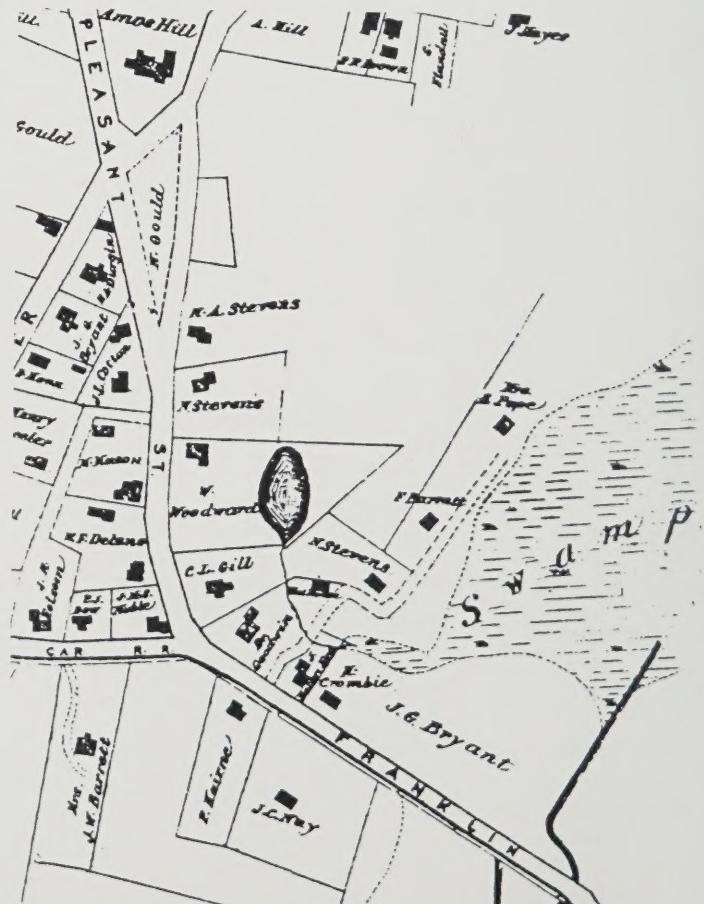


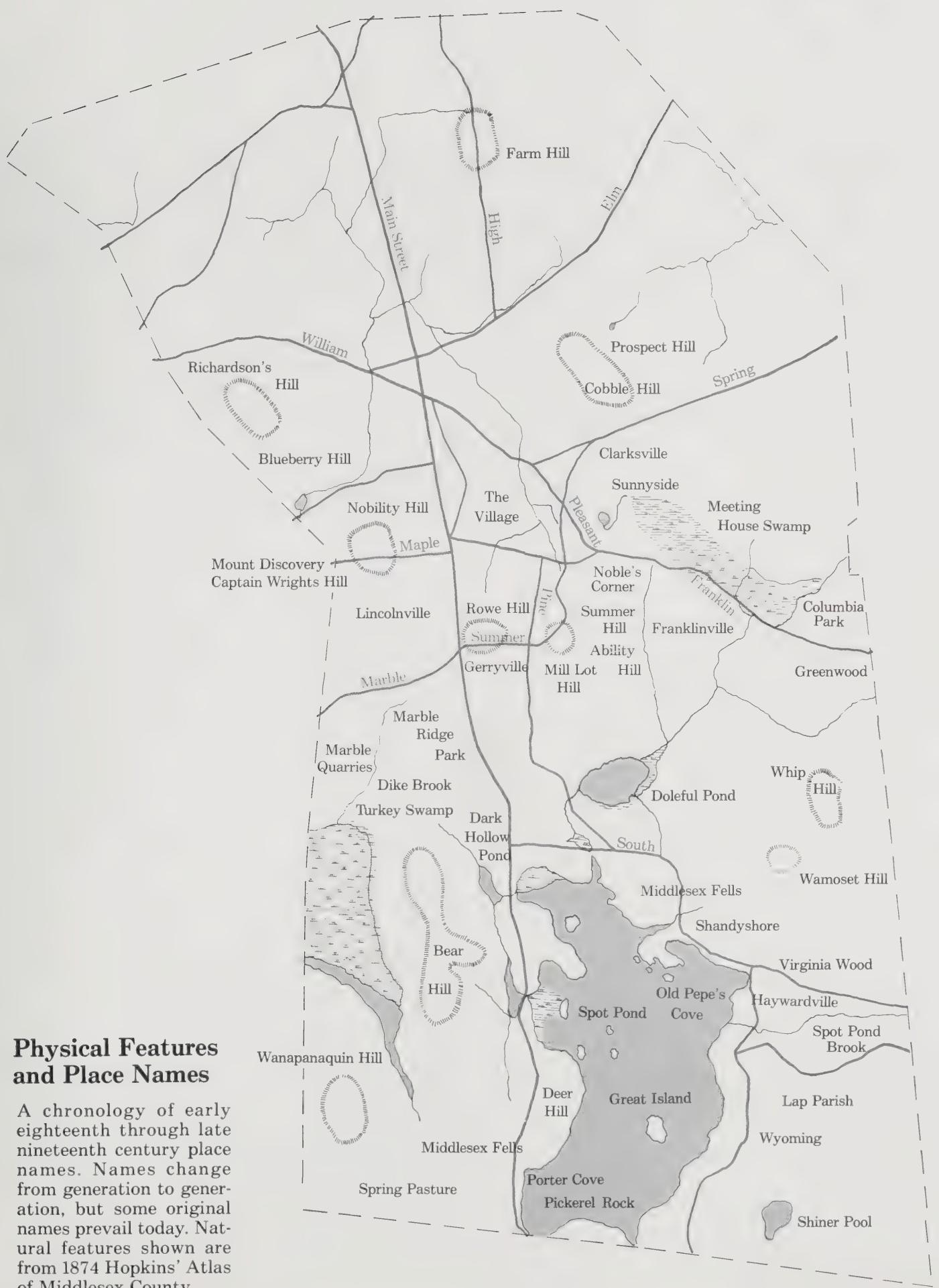
## Naming the Early Hills and Swamps

Early land records indicate that the seven major hills and most of the swamps of Stoneham were given names in the first years of settlement and some had functions as orientation points and boundary markers. Many of the names given the land by the first generations of settlers have been lost. Seventeenth century farmers called Lawrence Hill (near Summerhill Street) Mill Lot Hill; others have called it Summer Hill because of its proximity to one of the oldest streets in town. Cobble Hill, a tableland from Spring Street to Elm, crossed by Green Street, has been called Richardson's Hill, Louden's Hill, Green Hill, and Prospect Hill. Another Richardson's Hill, along William Street at the western edge of town, was first called Baldwin Hill after an early settler. Mount Discovery, recorded as such in early deeds, has also been named Hope Hill and Maple Hill. The most prominent hill is Bear Hill, the highest point of land in Stoneham and the surrounding Middlesex Fells Reservation. About one mile south of Stoneham Square, it is also referred to in early records as "Bare" Hill. The 1907 issue of the *New Era* proposed renaming many of the hills, adding substantially to the confusion.<sup>5</sup> Turkey and Cedar Swamps, in the western section of town, refer to the original fauna and flora found in and near the marshlands. The role that the hills of Stoneham have had as a backdrop for various activities in certain sections of the town, such as the shoemaking shops of Cobble Hill, is discussed in other chapters.

**Meeting House Swamp on 1875 Atlas Map.** This section of the 1875 J.B. Beers Atlas of Middlesex County shows the location of Meeting House Swamp, mentioned in early Town Records. S.H.S.

**Doleful Pond.** Today Doleful Pond is obscured by trees and brush, but the pond often mentioned in early settler's accounts is still in existence. Ice was cut on Doleful Pond in the mid-nineteenth century. The original route of Pond Street ran close to Doleful Pond, to the east of its present route.





## Physical Features and Place Names

A chronology of early eighteenth through late nineteenth century place names. Names change from generation to generation, but some original names prevail today. Natural features shown are from 1874 Hopkins' Atlas of Middlesex County.

# Stoneham Before Incorporation 1640-1725

## The Indian Landscape

William Stevens' *History of Stoneham* relates several stories about conflicts between Indians and inhabitants of Stoneham in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. However, the Pawtuckeog, or Pawtucket tribes north of the Charles River were largely decimated by disease by the time Stoneham was settled. Nanapeshamet, chief of the Pawtuckeog dwelled approximately four miles to the south of Stoneham, on the banks of the Mystic River. He was killed in battle in 1619. In 1639 his widow, the Squaw Sachem, deeded the lands of Charlestown, Watertown, and Cambridge in exchange for corn and title to her land on the shore of Mystic Pond.

Town histories give some indication of Indian hunting and farming areas within the boundaries of the town. Kibby Spring, on Spring Street, was used by the Indians. The plain south of Central Square to Marble Street was used for the cultivation of corn. Reportedly, the fields were still being used at the time of settlement. A few Indians are reported to be buried in the Burying Yard on Pleasant Street.<sup>6</sup>

## The Early Agricultural Community

Between ca. 1658 and its incorporation as a town in 1725, Stoneham functioned as a farming community. It was situated at the northern edge of Charlestown, which was settled in 1629-30. By 1640, Charlestown's boundaries included a vast territory. As defined by General Court grants and Indian deeds, the territory encompassed Woburn, Malden, Wilmington, Burlington, Somerville, Stoneham, Melrose, and parts of Medford, Cambridge, Arlington, and Reading.

Situated at the northern end of the Charlestown tract, the Stoneham area was remote and difficult to reach. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was known as "Charlestown End." Medford originally provided the only crossing of the Mystic River, and only at low tide, until a bridge was built about 1637. Other towns were set off from Charlestown within a few years: Medford in 1630, Woburn in 1642, Reading in 1644, and Malden in 1649.

In 1640, Stoneham "had not a single occupant."<sup>7</sup> Prior to 1658, the territory was owned by the inhabitants of Charlestown as common land. Richard Holden, a carpenter and mason formerly of Suffolk County, England, reportedly built a cabin near Bear Hill in 1645 as a squatter. A sawmill (later used as a gristmill) was built at the mouth of Spot Pond Brook by 1645. In 1658, the Charlestown lands were divided and apportioned to Charlestown taxpayers. Range lines running east and west in quarter mile divisions were established, with two divisions and seven and a half ranges in each division. The ranges extended to about Main Street and Richardson's Lane. North of the divided lands were Charlestown Farms, a 600-acre tract set off

and retained by corporate Charlestown for lease to individuals. Charlestown Farms were bounded by the Reading line at the north, on the west by Woburn, on the east by a line corresponding to Mountain Avenue in Wakefield, and on the south by the northernmost range line, approximately Richardson's Lane and Main Street. Seventy-nine-acre Spot Pond Meadow was also retained by Charlestown.

Stone walls, some erected by slaves, marked the range lines. A few fragments of the walls existed until recently, but traces of the field system are generally not retained in the street system of today. Reconstruction of the original land grants of Stoneham is difficult, as the tracts were not well recorded for this outlying area of Charlestown. Shortly after 1658, however, there were about six landholders within the sections of Charlestown End opened to settlement by Charlestown.



Lime and Marble Quarries. A section of the 1875 J.B. Beers Atlas shows the location of deposits which were quarried in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. South Marble Street was the route to the quarry. It was originally known as Atwood's Lane.

At least four of the first settlers were farmers. John Gould (1646-1690) settled in the northeast near the South Reading (now Wakefield) line, Thomas Green (1606-?) settled in the east/southeast; Patrick (Peter) Hay (1657-1748) in the northwest, and Thomas Gery (1638-?) near Farm Hill. Stoneham's seventeenth and eighteenth century settlers characteristically came from other portions of Charlestown or Charlestown End, or from the vicinity of Salem, Lynn, or Ipswich. John Gould probably came from Towcester, in Northamptonshire, England; Thomas Green was born in Leicestershire, England, and arrived in Charlestown in 1636. Patrick Hay came from Edinburgh, Scotland.<sup>8</sup>

Within the range lines, individuals were granted land by lot, according to their rating as taxpayers. Allotments were divided between the first and second divisions to equalize the value of the land. The northeastern section of Charlestown End was preferred by the first settlers because of its proximity to the South Reading (Wakefield) meeting house, established in 1644. The nearby settlement also offered protection from Indian attack. At this time, the South Reading meetinghouse served a large region, including the present-day towns of Melrose, Stoneham, Wilmington, Reading and Wakefield.

Early settlers avoided the swampy and rocky areas and cut through the forested areas to open roads and to obtain buildings materials. By 1673 there was a large trade in cedar posts, shingles, and clapboards in the vicinity of Stoneham. The Selectmen of Charlestown granted many inhabitants permission to cut trees in Cedar Swamp near Spot Pond, and John Mousal was charged with inspecting the number and size of trees which were felled. Despite protection of the forest by orders of the Selectmen, the character of the forest changed dramatically in the first hundred years of settlement, as a result of timber cutting and cattle grazing.

The first settlers of the Stoneham area sought productive agricultural land, and the Stoneham soil proved to be adequate, although rocky. In addition to farmers, at least two early residents were masons, Richard Holden (1609-1696) and William Bicknel. Local marble deposits were identified by Charlestown as a source from which to burn lime for mortar necessary for building foundations and walls. The largest quarry, near South Marble Street, was in existence when Marble and Summer Streets were laid out by Charlestown in 1638. Another quarry was located near Spring and Summer Streets. Charlestown leased land in 1665 to Bicknel to carry on a lime business, and retained a quarter acre of quarry land to be held in common for use of Charlestown. The Marble Street quarry was still in use in 1850, although soapstone was then worked in the seam.

By 1700, the most thickly settled portions of the area were at the outskirts. There was no organized movement to settle Stoneham as there had been for

adjoining Woburn, and no resultant interest in a town plan. A view of the area at the beginning of the eighteenth century would have shown few buildings, one or two roads laid out by Charlestown, numerous private ways, and no town center.

By 1700, several individuals accumulated extensive tracts of land. Peter Hay's holdings included several farms totaling about 250 acres, in tracts situated throughout the town. John Vinton came from Woburn in 1710 and acquired 270 acres in the southern section. His homestead was situated between Pond and South Streets. Timothy Wright, also from Woburn, settled near Wright and Hancock Streets in the western portion. His farm extended from Marble Street, west of Main, to Montvale Avenue. Several hundred acres also were owned by members of the Green family in the eastern section.

Charlestown leased Charlestown Farms to several individuals from 1658 to 1760. Terms of the leases varied. One lease, extending from 1705 to 1726, required the following commitment from the lessee, Stephen Williams.

the lessee should build and finish upon said Land  
A Dwelling house which shall be Twenty Two foot  
Long and Eighteen foot wide, nine foot studd  
between joists, and a Leanto at the end of said  
house, Twelve foot Long, the breadth of the house  
six foot stud, and shall Dig and suffieciently stone  
A Convenient Seller under said House, and shall  
Build and cary up a Double stack of Brick  
Chimneys to a Convenient height above the  
house, and shall Lay two floors in said house, and  
Leanto and fill the Walles Between the Studs and  
Ceile them with Plained boards or Lime morter on  
the inside . . . And shall also plant two acres of  
said land with Good fruit Trees, for an Orchard,  
the Trees to be planted thirty Two foot asunder,  
and Fence said Orchard intire . . .<sup>9</sup>

Williams was also required to reserve eighty acres for woodland. Lease requirements for the five farms built within the Charlestown Farms tract remained standard: 18'×22' houses with a 12' lean-to, and a 20'×30' barn.

Many new families arrived in Stoneham between 1658 and 1725 to work as farmers, weavers, shoemakers, masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths. The families of Gould, Green, Geary, Lawrence, Howe, Hay, Bucknam, Vinton, and Hill were among late seventeenth and early eighteenth century settlers who would influence the economic and political development of the town well into the nineteenth century. Their English and Scottish backgrounds would remain standard ancestry for many generations of future residents.

Several nineteenth century historians of the town have written about the humble origins of the first families. "The foundations of Stoneham were laid, not by men of culture and wealth, but by the brawn and culture of laborious yeomen,"<sup>10</sup> observed William Stevens.

To all People before whom these Presents shall come to know  
ye that Peter Hay Esq; of Storham in the County of Essex in this his County  
Province of the Massachusett Bay in New England gentleman For and in Consideration  
of the summe of four hundred pounds in money alredy  
paid to me in hand by my son John Hay of Storham before said the Receipt where  
of I do hereby acknowledge the receipt thereof with fully satisfied paid and contented  
for ever. Part there of have given granted Bargaine and sold: and doo by those  
present further give unto Bargain set oute Conuict and Con-  
form unto my said Son John Hay his heire Execut & admitt and assignee: divers  
parcels of Land lying and being in the township of Storham aforesaid as they  
are heretofore butted and bounded the first Parcell is my Aker bounded at the Norwott  
orchard and Fencing and Fencethat is on the same and it is Bounded at the Norwott  
corner with a Bear oak tree and therit Run Eastward to the highway: Near the Bridg  
and on still by the highway till it com near to another little Bridg between Peter's  
and my house at a Stake and stone: then from said Stake and stone it Run Eastward to a stump  
and stone about it: then it Run straight from said stump to an old oak tree that was above  
the side of Edent Farmes ground: then further by by that which was said Dammons land to  
the other Rang line: then it turns West at the Rang line Runing a few Poles from it  
toward and Run directly by Captain Phillips land to a stone wall that is by my son James  
Hay's land: then it turns and Run by said wall that parts said James or land and my land  
then it turns Southly at the Rail fence now stands: and then it turns westerly as the  
Rail fence now stands: and then it turns and Run south westerly by the fence now stand-  
ing to a hoop of stones: and then it turns westerly and Run straight to a Stake and stone  
by the highway: and near the Rang line: and then on the west side of the high-  
way is the Rang line Run: John Gold's land on the south untill it comes to the corner  
next John Gold's hous lot or land he lieveth on: then it turns North as the fence now  
stands with in Gold's land west: untill it comes to the Back oak at the Norwott corner  
first mentioned Excepting the Country Road that lyeth through part of the aker  
Bounded westerly and also one third of a lot of wood land near David Gold's the  
said third contains about three acres &c it more or less and it is the North part  
of it is butted and bounded as followeth westerly by the land of Benjamin Gay junr  
southerly by the land of David Amm Green junr: easterly by the land that was  
more or less and southerly by the land that of James or land that  
and also one third of a lot that is wood land that I bought of Eliot Stor that  
lyeth by the meeting house: the whole lot containing about forty acres  
and one half: and the third is about fifteen acres and three quarters to  
it more or less as it is butted and bounded viz (it is the middle part) westerly 41°  
mays land and is twenty seven poles wide a hear: Nor the land that I gave to my  
son James: East Capt Parker's land: and is about thirty three poles wide: and  
southerly by the land that I gave to my son Peter: and also one third of a lot  
on or near Baro hill by Capt Vinton's part: it being the south part and it con-  
tains about three acres and one half: the whole being about eleven acres: bothie  
one third three acres and one half more or less as it is: Bounded south & west by  
the land of Capt Vinton and at the west end it is about twenty poles wide: North  
with the land I gave to my son Peter and East with the land of William  
Parker and also one third of a lot that lyeth on the East side of Joseph  
Arends land said land contains about seven acres and one half (the same)  
about three acres: the third being seven acres and one half more or less as  
it is: Bounded and bounded east by the land of Joseph Arends: and it about  
Twenty seven pole and one quarter more: southerly by the land I gave  
to my son Peter East by the land of John Gould and it is about twenty seven poles  
wide: and southerly by the land that I gave to my son James Hay: and it  
is the middle part of the lot: and also one third of a lot at the Southwott  
corner of spot Pond swam: the content of the whol is about thirty  
two acres and one half: and the third contains ten acres more or less  
as it is: Butted and bounded (being the middle part) East with the  
land I gave to my son James: west with the land I gave to my son  
Peter Hay's: and south with the Rang line and Capt Vinton's land  
and North with the Rang line and Son Coman's land: and Mr Pains land  
With all the right of wood brush grass herbid timber and timber like trees  
that is standing lying or growing on the same: with all the Building and  
fences and fencing that orchard and orcharding on them or any part of them

them: with all other the Right, title or prouerbe and a  
purturance thereunto belenging or in anywise properly appor-  
taining to them or to any Part of them to him my said son John  
Hay his heire Execut & admitt and assignee for ever to have and  
to hold the aforesaid premises and every part therof  
for a good sume and of faceable Title of Inheritance for ever  
But I Reserve somuch of the buildings orchard wood and timber  
as I shall see Reason to use so long as I live: But after my said son my  
son his heire Execut & admitt shall or may have the free posseesion  
of all and every part therof: and further if the said Peter Hay  
Senr Doe for any half my heire Execut & admitt grant unto &  
conveyant with my son John Hay his heire Execut & admitt and  
assignee that I have good Right full power and lawfull authority  
to make this Conuiance at this time: and that my said son  
John Hay his heire Execut & admitt shall or may at all  
times and from time to time for ever have after Peaceably &  
quietly haue hold injury occupie and possesse the same to  
out the lawfull let late Hindrance Contradiction of any Person  
whatsoeuer: and that the aforesaid premises and every part of it  
may be and remain a good free title of inheritance to my said son  
John Hay his heire Execut & admitt and assignee: If the said Peter Hay  
Doe hereby warrant and Ingage to the said premises and every part  
therof from all for ever gift grant sale, lease, alienation, joynery  
& or otherwise title of Dower will or intail bond or forfeiture, Not  
gager attach ments judgment or Execution or any such like title  
or tressesse had orde or don lawfully by any Person at any time  
Contrary to the true intent of these presents and in witness of  
the same I the said Peter Hay Senr have sette unto set on  
hand and affixed on seal this twenty eighth day of April in the  
Year of our Lord God one thousand four hundred and twenty  
nine: and in the second year of the Reigne of our soueraigne  
Lord Georg the second King of Great Britton &c  
Signed sealed and delivered  
in the presence of us witness

John Hay  
William Cowden

John Hay Esq Reading June 2: 1729  
Peter Hay personally appeared and acknowledged  
this instrument to be his voluntary act  
and to be told me by William Bryant  
Justice of Peace

Chas: Lamb: Dec: 22: 1729  
Reed and accordingly Entred in the Registry of Deeds for said  
County Lib: 29 pag: 408, 9, 10 Attest Fra: Foxcroft, Reg: S





## First Period Houses

Houses built during the first period of settlement in Stoneham (ca. 1640-1725) followed the type of construction developed in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Heavy, handcut timber frame buildings covered with wooden clapboards or shingles provided the first settlers with a basic dwelling. A two and one-half story, central chimney plan seems to have been favored for many early houses. Photographs from the late nineteenth century are the source of much of this information, as many of the early houses are gone. Additions extending the house at the rear with a shed roof, creating the 'salt box' shape were characteristic, as was a two-room-per-floor plan, often 18'×22'.

The Jonathan Green House on Perkins Street, built ca. 1720, and the Millard-Souther-Green House on Green Street, ca. 1715, are examples of buildings remaining from this period. Houses built during these years reflected functional rather than stylistic requirements.

Above:

**Jonathan Green House, 63 Perkins Street. Photograph ca. 1900.** Built ca. 1720 by Jonathan Green, formerly of Malden. The five-bay facade, central chimney, rubblestone foundation, and small, multi-paned windows are characteristic of houses built in Stoneham in the early eighteenth century. S.H.S.



# Stoneham, A Separate Town 1725-1806

In 1725, the Stoneham area had approximately 250 inhabitants, one sawmill, one gristmill, one school house, and about fifty houses scattered throughout the rocky, forested land of Charlestown End. During that year, 54 men petitioned the General Court to set off the area as a separate town. The remoteness of the area from the meeting houses of Charlestown and South Reading necessitated such a petition, as the Act of Incorporation recognized:

... Whereas the Northerly Part of the Town of Charlestown within the County of Middlesex is Completely Filled with Inhabitants who Labor Under Great Difficulties by their Remoteness from the place of public worship and have thereupon made their application to the said town of Charlestown and have likewise addressed the Court that they may be set off a District and Separate Town and be vested with all the powers and privileges of a Town ...

The Act also defined the division from Charlestown as "The Northerly Part of the said Town of Charlestown, that is to say all the Land on the East side of Woburn, the South side of Reading, the West side of Malden, and the North side of the Fifth range of the First Division of Charlestown Wood Lots be and hereby is set off and constituted a separate Township by the name of Stoneham."<sup>11</sup> The name Stoneham seems to have been taken from Stoneham, England. This place name and others selected by early settlers reflects the English and Scotch ancestry of the early community.

With the Act of Incorporation, The Town of Charlestown relinquished claim to Stoneham, but retained claim to Charlestown Farms. The claim was held until 1760.

## Town Boundaries and Land Character

The first town boundaries, set in 1725 by a joint committee of Charlestown and Stoneham give an indication of the topographic and geological features that the settlers found:

"Beginning at Holden's line, the bounds were set as follows:

- 1st. A heap of stones, the west side of a little cedar.
- 2nd. A heap of stones.
- 3rd. A large red oak.
- 4th. A small tall white oak with a crotch.
- 5th. A tall walnut.
- 6th. A white oak with a crotch near the top.
- 7th. A young white oak with a crotch about half way up, on the west side of a hill east from Spot Pond.
- 8th. A heap of stones near a small white oak, within twelve rods of the east side of the pond.
- 9th. A tall walnut about twenty rods south of the pond.
- 10th. A dead white oak stump, about twelve rods west of the pond, with a heap of stones about it.
- 11th. A red oak on the north side of a cliff of rocks.
- 12th. A young walnut with a heap of stones about twelve rods east of Turkey Swamp.
- 13th. A large red oak about six rods, near Turkey Swamp.
- 14th. A heap of stones upon a flat rock about twenty rods west of Turkey Swamp.
- 15th. A pine tree on a rocky hill.
- 16th. A heap of stones with a stake against a stone wall upon Woburn line."<sup>12</sup>

## The First Town Center

The first town meeting was held December 24, 1725. A committee of three was chosen to survey the dimensions of the meeting house at Lynn End. In the next year a meeting house was built near the intersection of Summer and Pleasant Streets. The meeting house is described as a "plain" building, "thirty-six by forty feet, with galleries on three sides and posts twenty feet high" sited between "the black oak tree and the red oak tree upon the hill near the schoolhouse." There were three doors, and in Stevens' words, "the building made no pretensions to architectural beauty, at first it was destitute of paint, and for years, its bare walls looked down upon a congregation who did not enjoy the luxury of pews."<sup>13</sup>

A Burying Yard was established in 1726 near the meeting house on a quarter acre of James Hay's land. A school, built ca. 1718, and a tavern kept by James Hay were already situated near the meeting house. The house at 118 Summer Street is probably the Hay house.

In 1793, a new school, measuring 20'×20' replaced the first schoolhouse. The earliest schoolhouse, which stood near the meeting house, was built ca. 1718. In addition to the school, meeting house and tavern, the town was served by a gristmill and sawmill located south of a brook near Lindenwood Street. The gristmill was built in 1708; the sawmill in 1738. Additionally, the earlier gristmill at the mouth of Spot Pond Brook was in operation.



**View of Summer and Pleasant Street intersection. Photograph 1980.** This intersection is the site of the first town center, which included a meeting house, school, and tavern. Land was purchased from the Gould family for an early schoolhouse, built ca. 1718, and the meeting house built in 1726. The meeting house was located on or near the site of the residence at 68 Pleasant Street.



Up to the time of the American Revolution, when there were approximately 75 dwelling houses, Stoneham could be best characterized as a thinly settled, poor community. In 1775, only the small settlement near the gristmill at the eastern edge of Spot Pond bore great resemblance to a village. The town center near the meeting house was still largely unpopulated. A few roads were built by the town between 1725 and 1775, including those at the east and west sides of Spot Pond, but private ways predominated.

Opposite:

**Burying Ground, 1726.** James Hay gave the Town "one and a quarter acrs, Lacking ten poles" for use as a burial ground on January 11, 1726, with the provision that "the Town of Stoneham should not fence the burying place nor make me fence it".





## Residential Architecture 1725-1790

During the eighteenth century, town residents could point to few monuments indicating the growth or wealth of the community. Residences were simple, undecorated buildings, reflecting the rural location and agricultural economy of the small settlement. Stevens reported: "The dwelling houses were generally dark and weather-stained. It was the day of things useful and not ornamental."<sup>14</sup>

The so-called Old Parsonage, built for the town's second minister in 1747, was hailed as the town's finest mid-eighteenth century building. The two story, gambrel-roofed dwelling had a five-bay facade, with a central entrance. The entrance was framed by pilasters and lit by a six-paned transom.

In the first 150 years of settlement, Stoneham hardly reflected the styles popular in the wealthier, larger, and better situated towns of New England. While fashionable Georgian houses, influenced by English buildings, were built along Newburyport and Cambridge streets, Stoneham's houses continued to reflect its agricultural and rural economy, and the struggles of its inhabitants' rural lives.

Houses built during the Georgian period, roughly 1725-1776, retained the central-chimney, center-hall plan favored by earlier builders, although rear-chimney center-hall plans appeared as well. From photographs

of now razed houses of this period, the characteristic pedimented Georgian doorway is often evident, and 12 over 12, or 12 over 8 double hung windows are common. The entrances of the Old Parsonage (1747), the Oliver Richardson house (ca. 1750), and the James Hill House (ca. 1750), were lit by glazed transoms. Shingle covered gable roofs, with a long ridgepole and no returns at the eaves were characteristic, although there are a number of early gambrel-roofed houses from this period: the Lynde House (ca. 1725) on Summer Street, a distinctively narrow cottage (ca. 1725) on Forest Street, and an unusual small house (ca. 1760) now located on South Marble Street and possibly moved from an earlier location on Warren Street. Gambrel roofs were singled out by a nineteenth century historian as marking a distinctive period of architecture in Stoneham. According to Silas Dean, gambrel roofs first appeared in 1740 and were popular for twenty years.<sup>15</sup> The narrow gambrel-roofed house of Forest Street invites comparison with the small eighteenth century gambrel-roofed houses of Salem, Marblehead and other early North Shore communities. The North Street/Forest Street corridor was a direct link with the Salem area, and may account for this small gambrel-house type.

Above:

**Hill-Sweetser House, ca. 1750. Photograph 1880.** Built by James Hill near Marble Street. Later owned by Lot Sweetser. S.H.S.



Lynde House, ca. 1725. Photograph ca. 1885. S.H.S.

Stoneham.



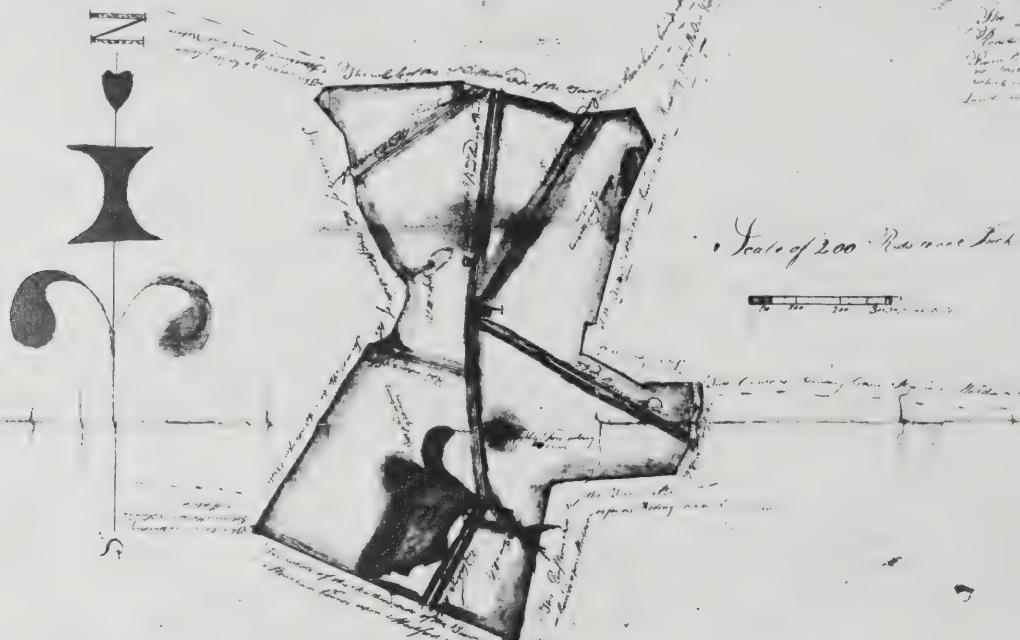
The Old Parsonage House.

The above stands on Central St. Stoneham, and was built in 1747 for a Parsonage, but is not now used as such. The occupants have been Rev. John Carnes, Rev. John Leach, Rev. John Cleveland and Rev. John H. Stevens.

# A PLAN OF THE TOWN OF STONEHAM

Taken from a Survey made in November 1794.  
 This Town lies in a Valley from Boston about Eight Miles distant from Cambridge  
 And contains 3354 acres, 250 of which lie contained in three several Woods called by the following names,  
 Two in the Town of Stoneham Two in the Town of Cambridge One in the Town of Woburn, One in the Town of Lexington, One in the Town of Concord, and one in the Town of Lincoln.  
 Total number of Woods 3354 acres  
 Surveyed ground 2200 acres  
 Woods 1000 acres  
 Roads 100 acres  
 Dug 1000 acres  
 Water 250 acres  
 Total number of Woods 3354 acres  
 Surveyed ground 2200 acres  
 Roads 100 acres  
 Dug 1000 acres  
 Water 250 acres

Wm. for. Willich Wm. H. (?)



(Stoneham)

1794 Map of Stoneham. In 1794, Luther Richardson prepared the first map of Stoneham for a statewide survey. S.H.S.

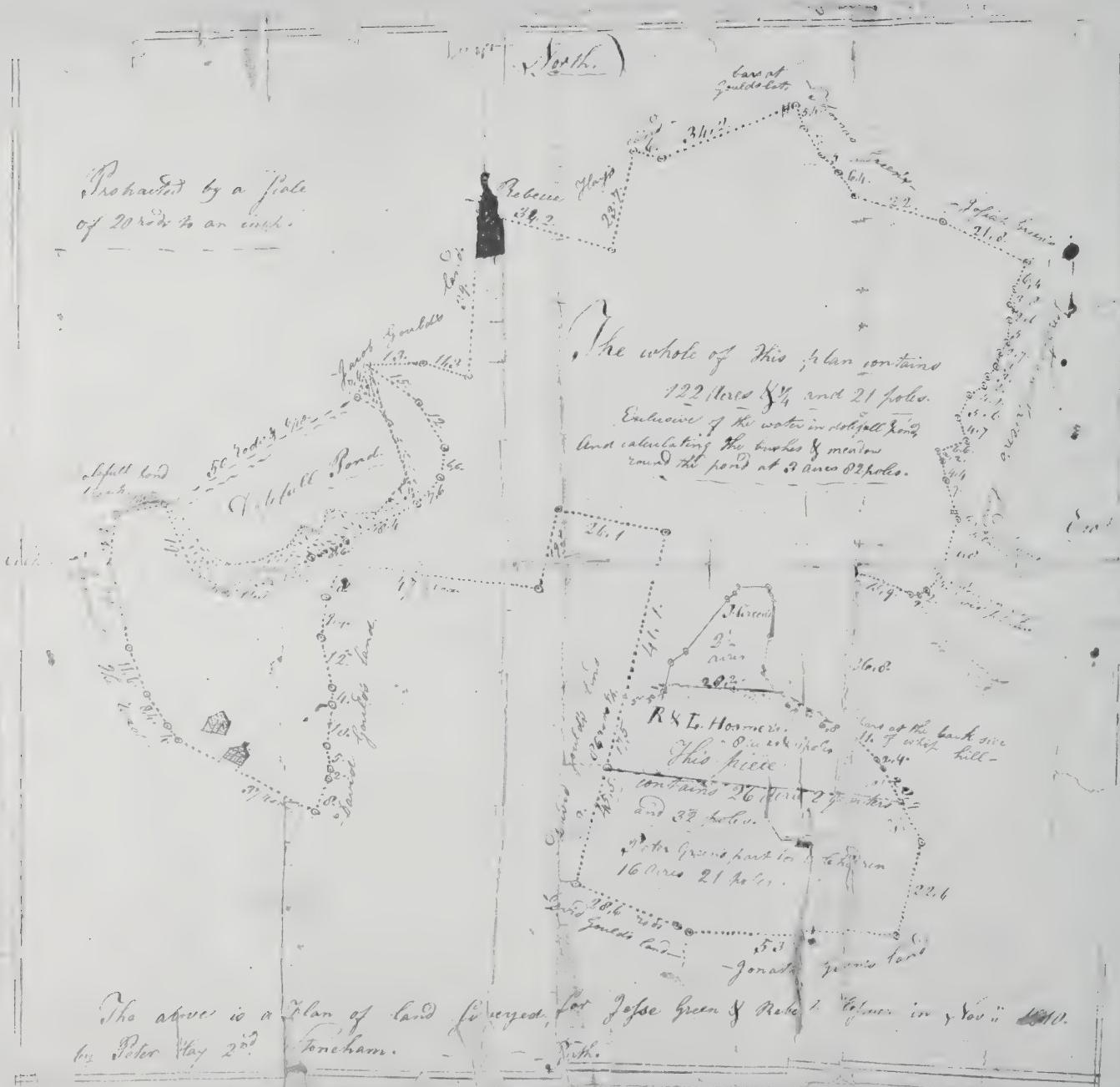


## The Second Town Center

In 1803, a new meeting house replaced the original built in 1726. This second house of public worship was built "on the slope of the hill that is east of the Burying Hill Brook on the North side of the road."<sup>16</sup> This site is near the intersection of Washington and Spring Streets. A small common was provided on both sides of the road (Spring Street) adjacent to the meeting house. The new building measured 46'×56', with an entry of ten feet, "making the body of the house square." It was voted that each window in the building would contain twenty-four squares of glass, 8"×10", and that a steeple be built at one end.<sup>17</sup> Aside from these descriptions derived from Town Records, and a small sketch on the 1830 Hales' Map of Stoneham, there is no certain record of the exterior appearance of the second meeting house. This building stood until 1840, when it was destroyed by fire.

**Second Meeting House: Surveyor's Sketch.** Although this sketch by surveyor John Hales on his 1830 survey of Stoneham may be a conventionalized drawing, it is the only surviving representation of the second meeting house.

The first meeting house site was chosen as the new site for construction of a combination school and Town Hall in 1820, yet the building was not completed until 1826. In 1833, the building was moved closer to the center of town, dragged by team across Gould Meadow to the corner of Pleasant and Central Streets. Thereafter, the building was known as the Old Town Hall, and eventually was converted to a residence, now 26 Pleasant Street. The decision to move the Town Hall was precipitated by the construction of the Medford-Andover Turnpike, which drew activity away from the Summer Street and Spring Street centers.



**Plan of James Green Land, ca. 1810.** Early settler's land, near Spot Pond at the intersection of Pond and South Streets. In 1876 this land became part of the Charles Teele farm. S.H.S.

# The Beginning of a Nucleated Town: 1806-1850

## The Medford-Andover Turnpike

The transformation of Stoneham from a farming village with large tracts of land to a nucleated town with a thickly settled village center was triggered by construction of the Medford-Andover Turnpike in 1806. The construction of this major toll road (along the present-day route of Main Street) changed both the use of the land and the economy of the town. The Turnpike was part of a flurry of regional road building activity stimulated by the opening of new bridges between Charlestown, Cambridge, and Boston. Within the first decade of the nineteenth century the Concord and Middlesex Turnpikes were also constructed. The Medford-Andover Turnpike became Stoneham's first direct link with larger regional markets and commercial trade. Cattle were driven in large herds through the center of Stoneham via the Turnpike, and produce was hauled by team from the north to markets in Charlestown and Boston. The first building erected along the Turnpike was the Gerry Tavern, the first of several taverns and hotels. It was built in 1806 in present-day Central Square, on the site of the Dow Block. Large cattle barns followed, constructed to quarter livestock on the way to slaughter.

Turnpike House, ca. 1815-1820. 583 Main Street.



To construct the Turnpike, ridges were cut down and several of Stoneham's small ponds were filled, including the one-acre Rose (or Rowe) Pond, near the intersection of Main and Hancock Streets. Despite the benefits of the Turnpike, other town roads were poor in the early years of the nineteenth century. John Hales recorded about Stoneham in 1821 that "the roads leading thereto are narrow, crooked, and uneven, except the Andover Turnpike, this runs the whole length of the town which is 3¾ miles."<sup>18</sup>

Stoneham's gradual transformation from a farming village to a nucleated town was furthered by the subdivision of farmland near the Turnpike for the construction of homes for non-agricultural families. Shopkeepers, shoemakers, carpenters, and other craftsmen built homes on the lots subdivided from agricultural tracts. Although the subdivision process began in earnest in the 1830s, it was a slow and incremental process. Only the areas closest to the Turnpike were subdivided into small lots, the area immediately outside the newly-defined center was without alteration of its pattern of farmland, woods, and marshes.

According to town historian Silas Dean, there were approximately fifty-five houses built between 1790 and 1835. Many of these houses were built by farmers and were situated along the network of roads linking Stoneham and the surrounding area, such as Elm, North, Spring, Pond, Green and Franklin Streets.

## Cobble Hill and Spring Street: An Historic Neighborhood



Cobble Hill, the northern extension of "Meeting House Ridge" extends across Spring Street, north to Elm Street. It is crossed by Green Street, one of the earliest routes in Stoneham. The name Cobble Hill refers to the number of cobblers, or shoemakers, living in the area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Men living in this area were often called by the nickname "Cob": Cob Gerry, or Cob Lynde.

The town's first parsonage was located on Cobble Hill, at the northern corner of Bow Street. Extant early houses of the area are the Baldwin-Kinsley House, ca. 1744, 45 Green Street, the Green House ca. 1742, at 44 Spring, and the Locke House, ca. 1880, at 14 Bow Street. Another early Locke House is located at 79 Spring.

At the eastern edge of Stoneham, the mineral springs of Spring Street are significant for their early industrial use. Called the "Kibby" spring by the few remaining Indians in the area in the late seventeenth century, several individuals later bottled water from the salt-free spring. Rufus B. Chapman began the production of "Old Kibby Beverages" made from spring water, cane sugar, extracts, and carbonic gas. In 1937, an advertisement claimed that the Old Kibby Beverages were recognized by "leading physicians in the state for superior medicinal qualities."

**Baldwin-Kinsley House, 45 Green Street, ca. 1744. Photograph ca. 1900.** Joanna Baldwin, grandmother of Mrs. Helen Kinsley, is pictured in the front yard. Ell at right was used as a harness shop. Collection of Helen Kinsley.



**Green House, 44 Spring Street, ca. 1742.** The central entrance with full sidelights is among nineteenth century additions to the house.

## William Street and Richardson Hill

William Street between Elm Street and the Woburn line was settled by members of the Richardson family. The Richardsons were farmers, weavers, and shoemakers. Oliver Richardson's 1787 homestead is illustrated on page 80. William Street is named for Micah Williams, a nineteenth century resident.



**Richardson-Linscott House, ca. 1712. Photograph 1900. 357 William Street.** When built, this house was part of Charles-town Farms, situated on land reserved by Charlestown after the 1725 incorporation of Stoneham. Until recently, part of the seventeenth century stone walls marking the northern boundaries of the Farms could be seen behind the house. Despite the Italianate exterior features visible today, the original house was built ca. 1712, as a four room house. The Richardson family came from Woburn in 1787, bought this house and built several additional houses along present-day William Street. This house was enlarged by Elijah Richardson. In 1850, his son Micah refashioned the house into an Italianate style facade, with prominent central pavillion and round-arched windows. Micah's four spinster daughters occupied the house after his death. Subsequent owners included a Mrs. Knapp who lived here ca. 1890-1920, and created an extensive landscaped garden on the original hundred acre property. S.H.S.



**Richardson House, ca. 1830. 342 William Street.** One of several houses built by the Richardson family.



## Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Residential Architecture: Federal and Greek Revival Styles

Houses built during the Federal period, (beginning about 1790 and lingering until the 1820s), evidence stylistic details which reveal a rural vernacular influence, rather than the elegant architectural vocabulary which was popular in centers such as Boston and Newburyport. Many of Stoneham's Federal period houses are standing today, and evidence a more lightweight construction than their predecessors. Many of the stylistic details on Federal houses fused with the emerging influence of the Greek Revival style which became popular after 1820. Characteristics of the Federal style, such as slender fluted pilasters framing a central entrance are seen in old photographs, but few examples with such characteristics exist in Stoneham today. The typical extant house of the period 1790 to 1820 is characterized by a gable roof with short returns, a one or two story elevation, and a five-bay facade with a central entrance. Exterior millwork is of simple profile. The work of Robert and James Adam in England, Samuel McIntire in Salem, and Charles Bulfinch in Boston did not influence Stoneham's buildings of this period, and there were no local clients who demanded the elegance and refinement that these architects offered.

**Tay House, ca. 1815. Photograph 1885.** 52 Elm. Gable roof and narrow width are characteristic of the simple two story houses built between 1790 and 1835 in Stoneham. Tay was a shoebench maker. S.H.S.



### The Greek Revival House: 1820-1850

The stylistic elements of the Greek Revival house were made available to carpenters and builders through the pattern book. Pattern books formed the basic vernacular vocabulary for the bulk of worker's houses built in newly "urbanizing" sections of Stoneham, as well as some of the finer houses of the period. The short eaves and simple millwork of Federal period houses were supplanted by a more confident combination of architectural elements, including prominent returns at the eaves, a sidelighted central or side door, and millwork turned in cornice-like stripes. The Greek Revival house sometimes resembled a small temple, due to its triangular gable end and classical columns. A square or L-shaped plan was repeated in various sizes, and suited for shoemakers and farmers as well as merchants. Narrow wooden clapboarding covered the exterior, and was usually painted white or yellow. A change in building technology appeared during the course of the Greek Revival period as cut nails and lightweight sawmilled lumber replaced the heavy-timbered, slow construction and careful mortise-and-tenon joinery of the eighteenth century house.

The David Burnham House (ca. 1840) at the foot of Farm Hill was a fine example of a temple front Greek Revival house. Now razed, photographs reveal a full two-story plus attic elevation, with four Doric columns.

**David Burnham House, ca. 1835. Photograph 1900.** Excellent example of the Greek Revival style, with full classical temple portico. Located on Main Street near Farm Hill station. Razed, S.H.S.

Examples of several Greek Revival house types and stylistic variations are found throughout Stoneham. The ca. 1850 Sweetser House at 434 Main Street has a full temple facade with wide corner pilasters, and fluted Ionic columns at the porch. The 1840 Silas Dean House at 8 Pine Street has a five-bay facade, and a distinctive porch carried by four Doric columns. The house at 34 Wright Street is representative of the dozens of small Greek Revival houses with sidehall plans and sidelit entries which were built in Stoneham before the Civil War.



John Steele House, ca. 1850.



Silas Dean House, 1840. 8 Pine Street.

One of the finest Greek Revival houses built in Stoneham was razed in 1979. Built by the son of an early settler, the house of John Steele on Main near North Street had a splendid five-bay facade. Built in 1850, the central entrance was framed by a heavy entablature, engaged pilasters, and sidelights.



Sweetser House, ca. 1850. 435 Main Street.



34 Wright Street, ca. 1820.



114 Marble Street, ca. 1850.

### Gothic Revival Cottages and Andrew Jackson Downing

In the 1840s and 1850s landscape gardener and horticulturist Andrew Jackson Downing of Newburgh, New York published many designs for houses intended for rural settings. In his books and in numerous articles in his periodical *The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* published in the late 1840s, he advocated an eclectic residential architecture drawn from several stylistic sources, but one which was always integrated with the natural setting. The use of natural materials and colors, and care in landscape design provided the desired rustic effect. Many of Downing's designs are characterized by a variety of Gothic ornament including cusped bargeboards, pointed arches, and vertical board and batten siding. Although there are no exact copies of the buildings published in Downing's books to be found in Stoneham, there are a few buildings which show the influence of this interesting and important phase of American architectural and landscape design.

**J.W. Spencer's Carpentry Advertisement, 1872.** A Gothic-style building was shown with John Spencer's advertisement in the Stoneham Directory. Spencer was the builder of many of Stoneham's factories and fine homes. S.H.S.



**J. W. SPENCER,  
CARPENTER & BUILDER,**  
FRANKLIN STREET, STONEHAM.

All orders for Jobbing promptly attended to.  
Orders from citizens of Stoneham and neighboring towns answered with despatch  
and work done in a satisfactory manner.

## Activity and Change in the Town Center

In the 1820s and 1830s, farming, the manufacture of shoes in small shops, and tanning and currying of leather continued to provide support for the majority of residents. Although Stoneham's early nineteenth century output of shoes and leather was high, the population remained very low in comparison with other developing Middlesex and Essex County shoe manufacturing towns.

In 1820, Stoneham had 615 residents, Woburn 1,519. Essex County centers like Lynn and Haverhill had already expanded to 6,138 (Lynn) and 3,896 (Haverhill). A small population would remain a standard feature through the nineteenth century.

The late 1830s saw the creation of the central shops which formed the nucleus of large shoe factories and tanneries two decades later. Men such as Luther and John Hill, Ira Gerry, and Allen Rowe consolidated the work that independent shoemakers previously performed in their own small shops. These "central shops" were often contained in the general stores of the proprietor or in the residences of the central shop owner. William Tidd and W. Bloomer began the tanning and currying of leather in a Central Square tavern basement, moving to larger quarters as the business grew. Although Stoneham's first 'factories' were very modest in scale, by 1837, 380,000 pairs of shoes were manufactured through the effort of central shops and individual artisans, and Stoneham was one of twenty-four Middlesex County towns whose chief industry was the making of shoes. In 1837, Stoneham's output of 380,000 pairs was the largest number in the county, and was produced by a work force of 260 men and 186 women. General store owners often acted as "middlemen" (as discussed in Section Two.) One writer remembered the grocery store and shoe shop combination:

In connection with the grocery was the usual shoe factory of the old style. Here at night, from the little shoe shops attached to nearly every dwelling in town came a fair quota of men and their "case" packed in wheelbarrows . . .<sup>19</sup>

Stevens recorded that the 1830s were a period of "great public interest and excitement."

. . . Public opinion was divided; one element was aggressive, and the other was intolerant. The question of African slavery was cleaving asunder the community. Political fervor was red hot . . .<sup>20</sup>

In 1837, it was voted not to allow anti-slavery lectures and discussions in the meeting house. Stevens noted: "It is difficult to realize to what an extreme limit some of the good men of that time allowed their zeal to carry thin in opposition to anti-slavery agitation." At least nine Stoneham residents in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were slave-holders, and the names of slaves appear in various church and town histories. There were at least three Underground Railroad stops in Stoneham, including a house at 307 Main Street, now razed, and the "Newhall place" on Green Street. Today there are few physical symbols remaining of the early nineteenth century black community in Stoneham.

Opposite:

**Map of Stoneham, 1830.** John Hales Map of Stoneham shows the route of Warren Street as it connected with Central Street; the intersection of Pleasant and Summer Streets at the site of the first meeting house, and the location of the second meeting house on Spring Street. S.H.S.

Map of New England  
Surveyed by John G. Hale in 1850.

Plan of the Town of  
**S U T O N E H A M**  
in the County of  
**M I D D L E S E X**.  
Surveyed by John G. Hale in Augt 1850.

Scale



Distance from Sturbridge Meeting House

	Under Boston	Miles
Boston State House	10	0
Courant Court House	13	1
Cambridge Court House	8	0
East Cambridge	8	1

Some of the public service facilities required for self-sufficiency were built or acquired in the 1830s. During this period six district schools were built, and a fire engine, the "Phoenix" was acquired. In 1833, a stock company of forty subscribers from Stoneham and nearby Reading formed a public stage coach line which traveled from Stoneham to Boston. The new line greatly improved the quality of transportation previously provided only by private stage coach. Between 1820 and 1840 the population increased from 615 to 1,017, with most adults employed in one or another phase of leather or shoe manufacture. By 1843, there were approximately 170 houses in Stoneham, including some shops which had been converted to dwellings. Silas Dean recorded in 1843 that between 1781 and 1806 only three new houses

were built; between 1807 and 1826, twenty-seven; between 1827 and 1842, thirty-two; a total of sixty-seven. The last jump corresponds to the increased commercial and industrial activity and investment at the town center, along the now important north-south Main Street axis.

**1836 District School.** In 1836 the town was divided into six school districts. The school house for District 1 was at the west side of Main Street near Richardson's Lane; District 2 was at Cobble Hill west of the standpipe; District 3 on Vinton Hill; District 4 on Pond Street; District 5 on the east side of Warren Street, south of Hancock; District 6 was located on the west side of Pine, north of Common Street. The one-room schools were of similar design, with a central belfry. S.H.S.



**A STATEMENT  
OF THE EXPENSES OF THE  
TOWN OF STONEHAM,  
FOR ONE YEAR,  
COMMENCING AT THE ANNUAL MARCH MEETING,  
A. D. 1836.**

**EXPENSES OF THE POOR-HOUSE.**

Paid to Nathan Perry, for finding and taking care of the poor - - - - -	\$230 00
To cash paid and services rendered respecting the settlement of Mary Hadley - - - - -	176 90
Expenses of Lucinda Brown - - - - -	16 25
For medical attendance to Thomas Melburn - - - - -	1 50
	<b>\$424 65</b>

**SCHOOLS.**

Money expended for Schooling - - - - -	433 48
School books - - - - -	7 96
	<b>\$441 44</b>

**TOWN OFFICERS.**

Town Clerk - - - - -	7 67
Collector's and Treasurer's premium - - - - -	7 25
Constable fees - - - - -	2 50
Selectmen - - - - -	9 10
Overseers of the Poor - - - - -	2 20
Assessors - - - - -	24 00
	<b>\$52 72</b>

**MISCELLANEOUS.**

To B. M. Perry, for serving as Constable in 1835	50
To O. W. Richardson, for breaking snow in 1835	11 75
To J. Bucknam, for breaking snow in 1835	15 00
To E. Pierce, for work on highway and breaking snow in 1837 - - - - -	8 50
To J. Wheeler, for breaking snow in 1837 - - - - -	22 15
Do. for placing willows on the causway - - - - -	9 17
To David Gerry, Jr. for ringing the bell - - - - -	30 00
To J. Hay, for moving the hearse-house - - - - -	1 75
To J. H. Wright, for services as a committee relative to making Andover and Medford Turnpike a free road - - - - -	7 75
Do. for examining and filing Town's papers - - - - -	50
To E. Gerry, for cash paid and services relative to making the Andover and Medford Turnpike a free road - - - - -	69 00
To E. Gerry, J. W. Noble, and B. F. Richardson, as committee to furnish seats for the Town Hall - - - - -	65 07
To J. Colburn and J. H. Wright, for services as superintending School Committee in 1836, five dollars each - - - - -	10 00
Darius Stevens, in full pay of a Note of three hundred dollars he held against the Town - - - - -	300 00
Do. for the interest on said Note for one year - - - - -	18 00
Cash paid for blank orders - - - - -	2 62
Perambulating Town lines - - - - -	3 00
To Thomas Gould, Jr. an abatement of his taxes on part of his personal property - - - - -	7 69
To William Green, an abatement of his poll tax - - - - -	96
To Amasa Farrier, a discount allowed on his list of Taxes to those who paid agreeably to a vote of the town - - - - -	146 75
Do. for an abatement of four poll taxes - - - - -	4 51
Do. for Amos Hill's tax - - - - -	15 49
For making out the Town accounts - - - - -	3 00
Printing expenses - - - - -	4 00

**\$757 21**

**\$1676 02**

**CREDIT.**

Money assessed in 1836 - - - - -	\$1544 00
Balance in the Treasurer's hands - - - - -	74 00
Money due from the State for the support of State paupers - - - - -	51 51
Money received from the State School Fund - - - - -	25 51
Money due from the Town of Woburn for the sup- port of Lucinda Brown - - - - -	2 00
Money received from the Town of Danvers for the support of Thomas Melburn - - - - -	2 71
Money received of Ira Gerry - - - - -	12 00
Total Credit, - - - - -	<b>\$1711 74</b>
Total Expenses, - - - - -	<b>\$1076 02</b>
Balance in favor of the Town, - - - - -	<b>\$635 72</b>

**TOWN'S DEBT.**

To Amos Hill, on a Note - - - - -	\$550 00
Do. for interest on the same - - - - -	33 00
Total. - - - - -	<b>\$583 00</b>

*By order of the Town,*

IRA GERRY,  
BENJAMIN F. RICHARDSON, } Selectmen  
of  
JOHN WHEELER, } Stoneham.



**Town Hall, 1846. Photograph 1890.** The 40'×100' Town Hall had a seating capacity of 600. With a prominent pedimented gable and corner quoins, the Hall was one of Stoneham's most fashionable mid-nineteenth century buildings. It was later known as the Center School. S.H.S.



**First Congregational Church, 1840.**

## The Mid-Nineteenth Century Civic and Religious Center

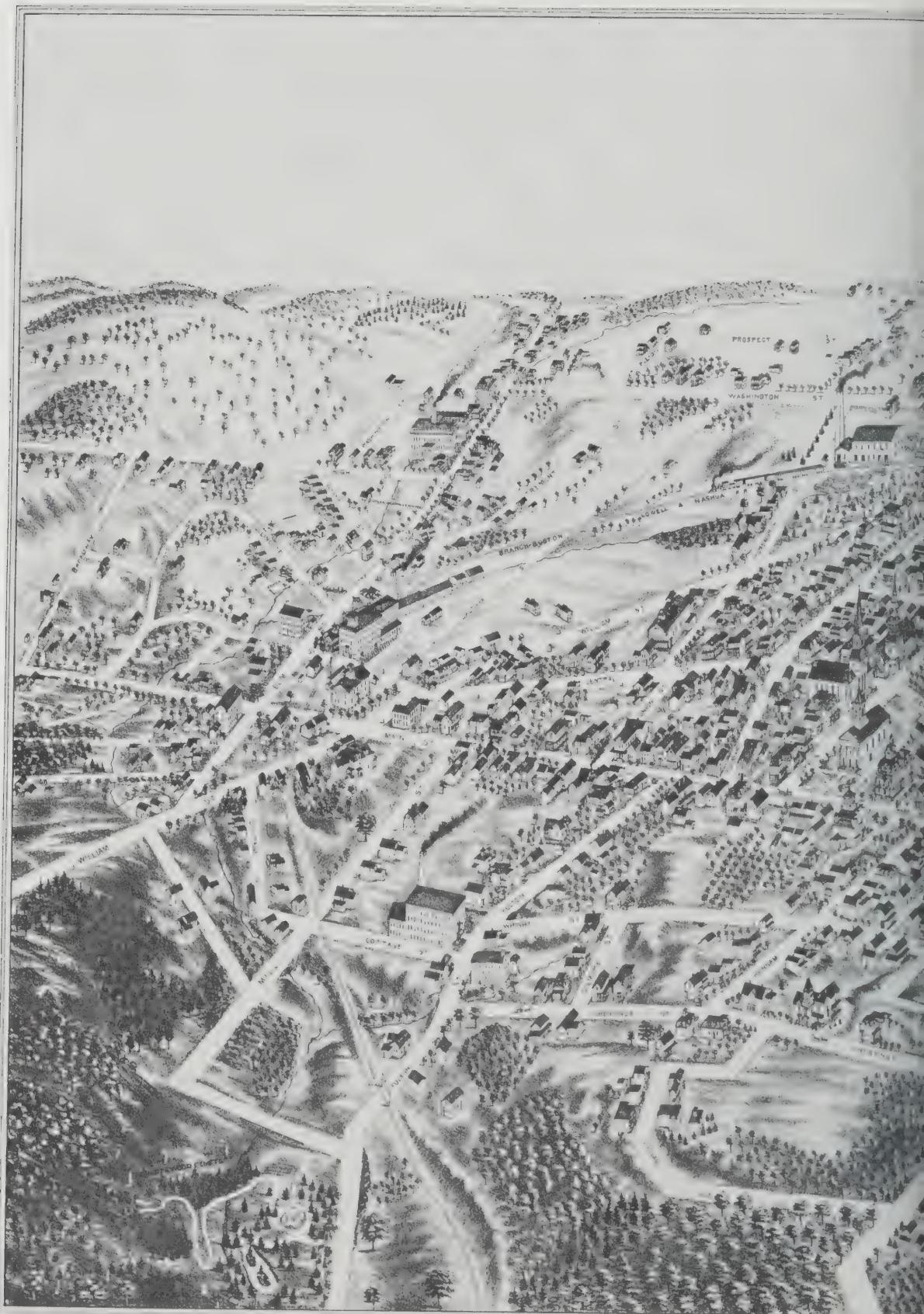
The town exercised no control over the financial support of the Church after 1826. In that year, a parish was organized and the church became independent of the town. In 1840 the First Congregational Church was built at Main and Common Streets. The building faced a small open area fronting on Main Street. In the same year, the Universalist Church was built at the corner of Common and Central Streets, on the site of the present Unitarian Church. Like the Congregational Church, it was of Greek Revival style. The 1878 Bird's Eye View of Stoneham shows the Universalist Church, without its steeple, in a new location on Pomeworth Street, where it was moved after being sold to the Catholic Church.

A new building housing both the Town Hall and a school was built between Common and Tidd Streets in 1846. The space around and between the churches and the Town Hall served as a sort of common, although it was never officially designated as such. It was also known as Church Square.



**View of Main Street, South from Common Street, ca. 1860.**  
Charcoal sketch of Main Street by a Stoneham resident shows the Boston to Stoneham coach on present-day Church Street. The grassy area in front of the Congregational Church is shown with three diagonal paths merging into a central path. Stores and residences line Main Street. S.H.S.

# The Industrial Landscape 1850-1880





1878 Bird's Eye View. S.H.S.

MAP  
OF  
STONEHAM

*Surveyed and Delineated*

*Robert Gerry*

*1858.*

*Note -  
Original map torn.  
Section missing*



The new roads and businesses built in the 1830s and 1840s created the framework for the profound physical change which occurred in Stoneham in the decade of the 1850s. A large population of shoe workers and manufacturers and a diversifying economy helped to create a small manufacturing center which barely resembled the town twenty years earlier. Between 1840 and 1850, Stoneham's population doubled, growing from 1,017 to 2,085. The Stoneham Five Cents Savings Bank was founded in 1855. This was Stoneham's first banking institution and provided an important local source of credit for merchants and shoe manufacturers.

A new Alms House was built on Elm Street in 1852. Further town expenditure was made in 1854-55 for the construction of three new schools on Central, Spring, and Gerry Streets. The various Town Offices were held primarily by the descendants of individuals already mentioned in the early settlement of the town, and in the formation of the first shoe shops and general stores. Town Officers in 1852 included Ira Gerry, Luther Hill, and Allen Rowe, Jr. as Assessors and Selectmen. John Hill, O.W. Richardson, and Lyman Dike were Overseers

Opposite:

**1858 Gerry Map.** Prepared three years before the railroad reached central Stoneham, the Gerry Map indicates the concentration of factories, residences, and businesses along Main Street and in Central Square. By 1858, much of the present-day street system east of Main was built-up; the area west of Main developed more slowly. S.H.S.

**The East School, 1855. Photograph ca. 1920. S.H.S.**

of the Poor; George W. Dike was Town Treasurer; Peter Green Jr. was Constable; and Silas Dean was the Town Clerk.

Stoneham was without direct railroad service until 1861. In 1846, the Boston and Maine Railroad began service through the east part of Stoneham. Horse-coach service from Central Square to the present-day Melrose Highlands Station began in the same year. The coach followed the route of Franklin Street, which was often washed out because of the surrounding marshes. The coach was replaced by a twenty-five passenger capacity horse car line in 1859. This system of horse-car service connecting to steam-rail service was inadequate for both passenger service and the needs of the growing leather and shoe industry. Consequently, there was great local agitation to run the Boston and Lowell or Boston and Maine directly through Stoneham. Three separate Stoneham Branch Railroad Companies were formed, in 1847, 1851, and 1859. The last company, consisting of J.T. Winchester, John Hill, Allen Rowe, Jr., Cyrus Hay, J.P. Gould, Alpha Richardson, Reuben Locke, Jr. and George W. Dike, was successful in bringing the railroad to Stoneham. The first section of the railroad was completed in 1861 as far as Farm Hill, and continued to Franklin Street in 1863. At completion, the railroad was leased and operated by the Boston and Lowell. It was bought outright by the Lowell in 1870.

# **EXECUTORS SALE OF REAL ESTATE.**

Will be sold at Auction on the premises,

**ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 2d,  
AT 2 O'CLOCK, P. M.,**

The Real Estate belonging to the heirs of Rev. John H. Stevens, late of Stoneham, deceased, consisting of a Dwelling House and other Buildings, and about 1 1-4 acre of Land, which will be sold in lots to suit purchasers. Said premises are pleasantly located between Main & Central Streets, being bounded on the north by a new Street recently built, leading from said Main to Central Street.

Also, at the same time about 3 acres of valuable Woodland, situated in the easterly part of the town, on the south side of Franklin St. near the Dwelling House of the late Phineas Stone.

**CONDITIONS MADE KNOWN AT THE TIME AND PLACE OF SALE.**

**DARIUS STEVENS,  
WM. F. STEVENS,** } Executors.

**SILAS DEAN, Auctioneer.**

Stoneham, April 21, 1855.

## The 1850 Industrial Census: Stoneham

Forty-three industries are listed in the 1850 Federal Census Schedule:

Name	Business	Capital Invested	Machinery	Employees	
				M	F
F.F. Clark	Paint	50	Hand	2	
David Damon	Cabinet & Box Making	2,500	Hand	8	
L.S. Sweetser	Shoe	100	Hand	3	3
Orin Hersam	Carpenter	1,000	Hand	12	
Samuel Cloon	Shoe	300	Hand	5	3
O.W. Richardson	Shoe	1,700	Hand	20	20
John Dean	Carpenter	200	Hand	1	
T.J. Welbourne	Blacksmith	350	Hand	1	
J & J Steele	Shoe	1,000	Hand	8	7
S.S. Sweetser	Shoe	100	Hand	4	4
D.L. Sprague	Shoes	1,500	Hand	9	6
Baker Edwards	Shoe	200	Hand	6	5
George Cowdrey	Shoe	700	Hand	10	8
T.N. Harris	Stabler	1,600	—	2	
Peter Green, Jr.	Shoe	500	Hand	5	5
Cyrus Hay	Shoe	500	Hand	20	20
B.F. Tay	Shoe benches	200	Hand	1	
William Hurd	Morocco				
Lyman Dike & Co.	Manufacture	7,000	Hand	8	
T.B. Hadley	Shoe	15,000	Hand	60	50
H.B. Wilkins	Shoe	100	Hand	2	1
H.N. Wyeth	Shoe	100	Hand	2	2
J. Worcester & Co.	Carpenter	200	Hand	2	2
Reuben Locke, Jr.	Shoe	350	Hand	6	
Joseph Stevens	Paint	600	Hand	7	3
James Pierce	Shoe	200	Hand	3	
Amos Howard	Shoe	300	Hand	3	2
Alpha Richardson	Shoe	7,000	Hand	30	30
Gerox & Child	Wheelwrights	8,000	Hand	30	20
A.J. Rhoades	Shoe	500	Hand	34	42
Charles Emerson	Shoe	3,000	Hand	5	5
Albert Green	Shoe	300	Hand	3	3
J.W. Barrett	Paint	200	Hand	2	
John Hill & Co.	Shoe	200	Hand	70	60
Converse & Robson	Drug & Spice	30,000	Water & Steam		
Warren Sweetser & Company	Manufacture	25,000	Steam	14	
Allen Rowe & Son	Shoe	5,000	Hand	44	20
Stephen Bucknam	Shoe	20,000	Hand	65	50
J.A. Lovejoy	Currier	2,500	Hand	3	
Tidd & Bloomer	Tin Plate Worker	500	Hand	2	
Newcombe & Co.	Curriers	10,000	Horse & Hand	12	
Joseph Leeds	Sash & Blind	11,000	Steam	14	
Joseph Leeds	Manufacture	300	Hand	2	
Joseph Leeds	Blacksmith	1,200	Carriages	1	

Stoneham's competitive role in the region's shoe manufacturing market was established in the 1850s as new and larger factories were built. Many factories were designed to utilize horse or steam power in the manufacture of shoes. John Hill and Company, one of the first to use machinery in the manufacture of shoes, built its modern, machinery-equipped factory on Main Street in 1858. In the 1850s, Lyman Dike and Company built its first shoe factory in the next block of Central Square, and William Tidd and Company added to its small tannery on Pine Street, near the eventual location of the railroad.

The Irish immigrants who would contribute importantly to the local labor force for the next half-century began to arrive in large numbers in the 1850s. By 1869, the first Stoneham Directory would list many Irish names, including seven Dempseys, six of whom were shoe-finishers, shoemakers, or shoe stitchers; five Finnegans, one Fitzgerald, one Fitzhenry, and a Fitzpatrick. With some exceptions, most new Irish shoemakers settled in the southeastern section of town within the semi-circle formed by Summer Street, or along Tremont and Elm. Shoe workers also came into Stoneham as day workers from neighboring towns by horse drawn barges which ran daily from Woburn and Wakefield to Stoneham's Central Square.

Worker's homes of the 1850s did not differ significantly from those of the previous decade, but the town's new class of manufacturers and merchants began to acquire the wealth which would permit the construction of fine homes built in the styles popular in Boston.

The development of Main Street and Central Square continued with the addition of new factories and shops. The direction of residential growth at mid-century was shaped by the busy thoroughfare of Main Street, by the concentration of shoe factories in the center of town, and to a limited extent by the railroad corridor.

Opposite:

1855 Auction Notice. S.H.S.





**Charles Brown House, Main at Common Streets, ca. 1860.**  
Charles Brown was William Tidd's son-in-law, and Tidd built this house. Brown later resided in a fine house at Maple and Chestnut Streets. S.H.S.

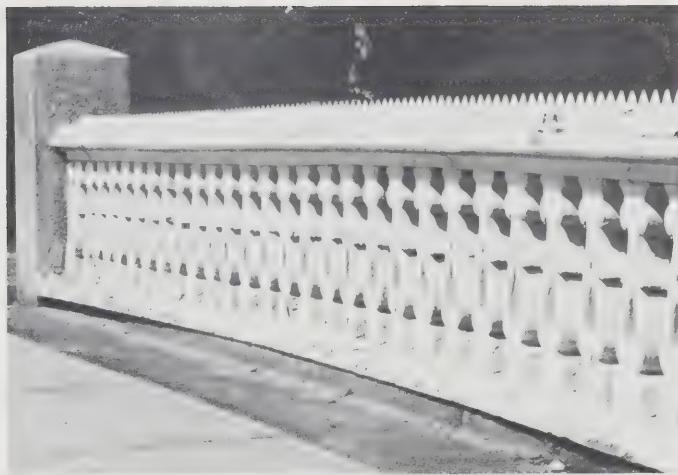


**William Tidd House, Main at Hancock Streets, ca. 1860.**  
S.H.S.

Opposite:

**Tidd and Bloomer Tannery, later W. Tidd and Company.**  
William Tidd and William Bloomer began finishing leather in 1840 and built this tannery twelve years later. Located on a large tract of land near Pine and Emerson Streets, the Tidd Tannery was one of the largest in the area. In 1850, with 12 employees, they produced a product valued at \$65,698, and in 1860, with 60 employees, one valued at \$194,000.

The fortunes of Stoneham's shoe and leather manufacturers rose and fell with regularity. In 1891, William Tidd was accounted the wealthiest man in Stoneham, and was the largest taxpayer. However, he nearly lost his business in 1861 with the outbreak of the Civil War. His contemporary John Hill Jr. enjoyed great financial success in the firm of John Hill and Company founded by his father John Hill and uncle Luther Hill. According to his obituary, however, "he seemed to be a favorite son of fortune but in the early seventies he met with financial reverses . . . his fortune was swept away and in the prime of life his business career was ended." (Stoneham Independent, June 8, 1907).



**Charles Brown House Fence, ca. 1860.** The cast iron fence and granite posts of the Brown house are still intact.



**Tidd House Gatepost, ca. 1860.** Hancock Street.



## The Italianate Style in Stoneham

The introduction of various modes of the Italianate styles of architecture in Stoneham after 1850 accompanied the growth of shops, factories, and businesses. Suited to both elaborate and modest dwellings, Italianate houses evidenced the growing consciousness of architectural fashion and the display of good taste. In this way, Stoneham was 'catching up' with the more style-conscious urban centers. Bracketed eaves, round or segmental arched windows, decorative moldings and panels and a variety of square or asymmetrical plans introduced new variety and texture into the mid-nineteenth century town. Additionally, color was introduced in a new palette of earth tones and polychromatic strong colors, contrasting with the dark Colonial houses and the light or white colored Greek Revival houses. One variety of an ornate, gable-roofed Italianate house was built in duplicate for a number of Stoneham businessmen. These houses have a prominent central gable, bracketed eaves, and a carefully executed central entrance portico. The builder of one, and possibly several of these houses was Worcester Brothers, builders of the Charles Dike House at 84 Franklin Street.

Flat-roofed Italianate houses, often with grooved corner pilasters and prominent overhanging eaves, and a variety of gable roofed, Italianate house types are seen throughout the town. More modest dwellings often have only simple brackets and a round arched window in the gable end; the most ornate examples have elaborate panelling, carved moldings, and other fine details.

**John Hill Factory, 1858. Photograph ca. 1870.** One of Stoneham's finest mid-nineteenth century buildings. Paired round-arch windows, a cupola, and a projecting central pavillion were among its notable Italianate features. A portion of this building still exists, behind a Main Street furniture store. S.H.S.



**Jerome Fay House, ca. 1870. 10 Pond Street.**



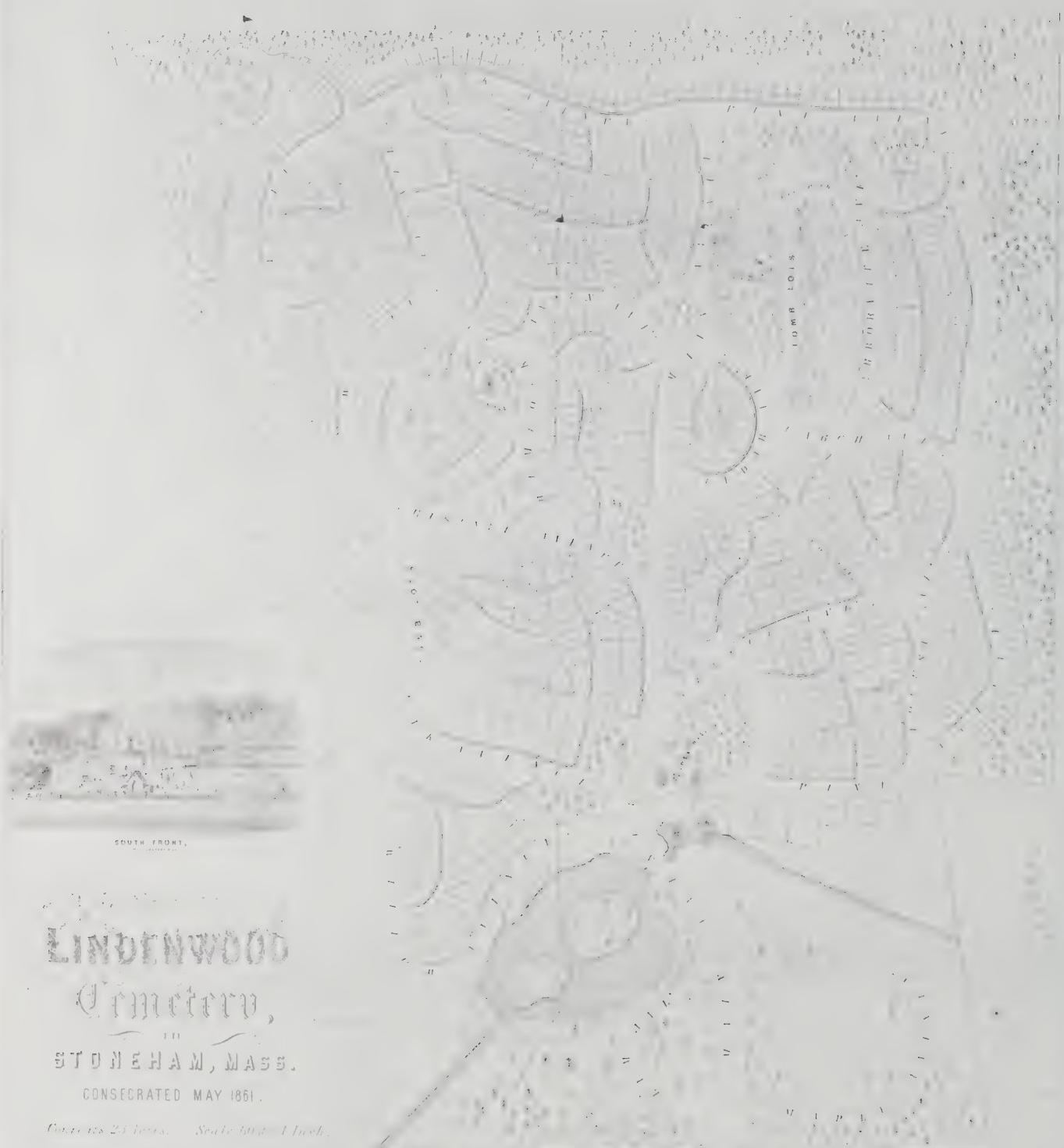
## The Octagon 1850-1855

Between 1850 and 1855, three of Stoneham's most unique buildings appeared. Such eight-sided frame houses are rarely seen in triplicate in such a small, rural community. Drawing from Orson Fowler's **The Octagon: A Home for All**, published in 1848, in which Fowler argued for the virtues of the eight-sided shape, these houses differ from each other primarily in exterior ornamentation. The most elaborate is the cupola-topped Pine Street house built by Enoch Fuller and later owned by G.W. Trowbridge, a local shoe manufacturer. The biographies of the three original builders give little clue to their motivation in choosing to build Octagons, although Fuller reportedly was once a guest in P.T. Barnum's Bridgeport, Connecticut Octagon house.

**Enoch Fuller Octagon:** 72 Pine Street. Built ca. 1850 for Enoch Fuller. A flying central staircase and fine interior finishes were part of the original design.



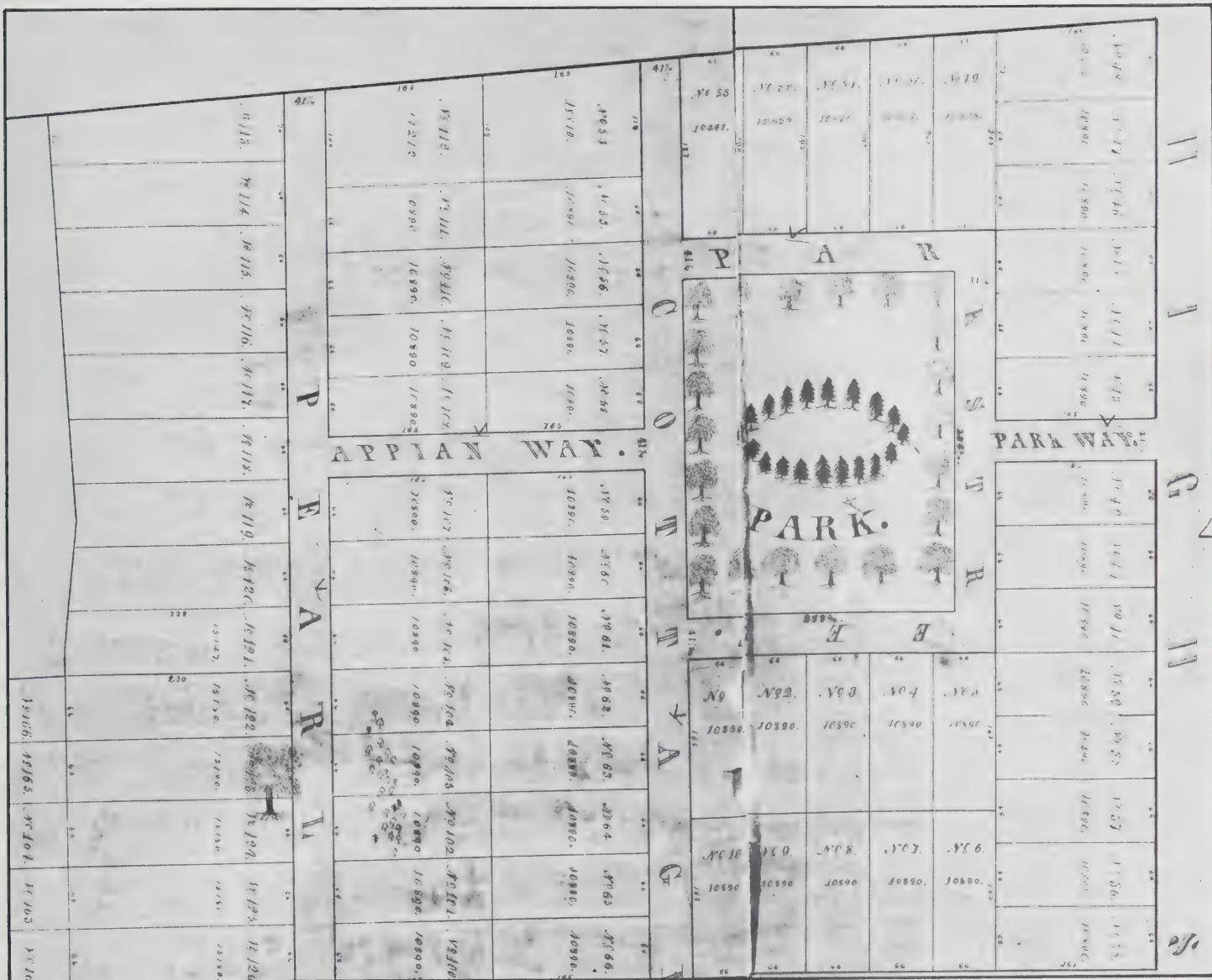
**William Bryant Octagon:** Spring and Washington Streets. Built in 1850 by Worcester Brothers. Bryant was a Stoneham shoecutter.



Designed and laid out by  
Amasa Farwell, of Stoneham.

George W. Dike,  
Tanner Hill,  
Amasa Farwell, Committee,  
J. Parker Gould,  
Robert Lachelle

Lindenwood Cemetery, 1861. S.H.S.



## Nineteenth Century Landscape Design

Gradually, roads from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were straightened and improved and many new public streets were built, but no predetermined, grand design seems to have inspired the town fathers. The design of new streets created by the Town was done on a functional and incremental basis, as Town records reveal:

### NEW ROADS 1859

And Repairing Others by Vote of the Town  
"Paid William Wardwell for building new road from Elm Street to North Street, 240 rods at \$3.23 per rod"

"Paid Jonathan Hay, for building Warren Street, 106 rods at \$2.37 per rod"

"Repairs on Fulton Street, damaged by the heavy shower on September 4"<sup>21</sup>

The public space formed by the intersection of Main, Franklin, and Central Streets as Central Square, and the large open area around the Congregational and Universalist churches and the Town Hall were more or less the product of accidental design. The most purposely-planned public space was Lindenwood Cemetery, artis-

tically designed by Town surveyor Amasa Farrier in 1861. Lindenwood was the second Stoneham cemetery designed by Farrier; he also planned the 1844 William Street Cemetery, which was only used for a short time. The curved paths and ornamental planting of William Street and Lindenwood Cemeteries followed in most careful fashion the well-published works of English horticulturist John Claudius Loudon and American landscape gardener Andrew Jackson Downing, as well as the design of the 1832 Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. Farrier, who previously taught school and kept a store, no doubt discovered the work of Loudon and Downing through books, as did hundreds of nineteenth century rural surveyors.<sup>22</sup>

Farrier designed a park as part of a subdivision for David Burnham on Farm Hill. Proposed in 1855, the streets including one named "Appian Way" focused on a small park square in which a circle of trees were to have been planted. Neither the streets or the park were built. Farrier also designed several private home grounds, including the land of shoe manufacturer Edwin Martin on Elm Street.



## Stoneham After the Civil War

Stoneham sent more than 500 men to the Civil War, and expenses to the Town were heavy. The growth of its industries enabled it to make a quick recovery. Manufacturing in Stoneham was stimulated by the Civil War, and the Town grew and prospered until the financial panics of the early 1870s. Many new factories were added, and the businesses of the first shoe manufacturers acquired considerable wealth by 1870. In this year, Luther Hill, younger brother of John Hill and partner in one of the first factories, had holdings of \$140,000, including his elegant Main Street mansion. The population continued to increase with the addition of new workers for the factories, many of them Irish. In 1865, the population was a modest 3,298; in 1870, 4,513.

**Lindenwood Cemetery, the 1869 Soldier's Monument Dedication.** Lindenwood Cemetery was a focus of local pride and enjoyment of nature, as well as a burial place for the dead. Sculpture and a fountain enhanced the picturesque plan of curving paths and ornamental plantings. S.H.S.

Opposite:

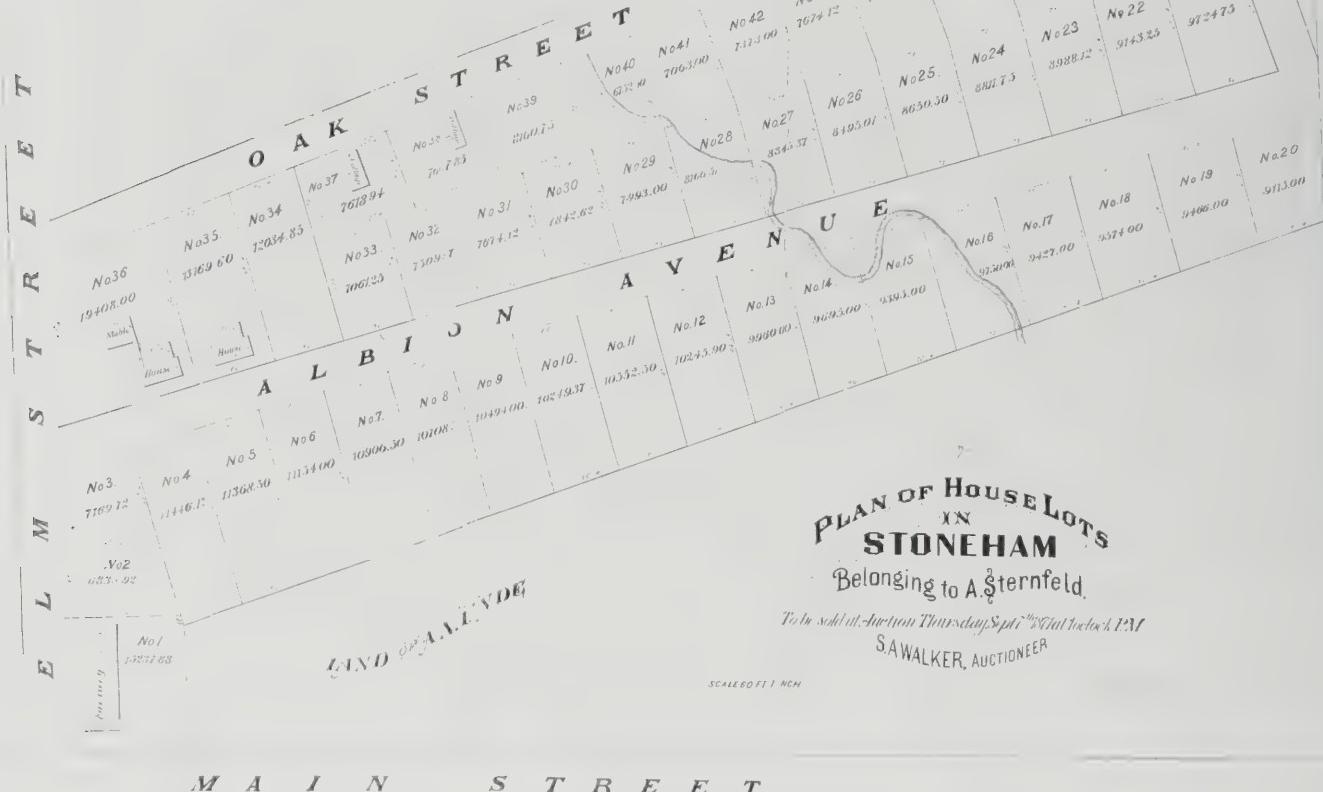
**1875 J.B. Beers Atlas of Middlesex County Map of Stoneham.** The Beers map illustrates the density and location of factories and dwellings; the horsecar route from Central Square to Melrose via Franklin Street, and down Main to Marble; and the location of natural features such as brooks and quarries.

**STONEHAM**

TOWN OF STONEHAM  
Scale 500 Feet to the Inch



**Albion and Oak Street Subdivision: Plan 1871.** Platted by A. Sternfield (surveyor unknown) in 1871, these lots were sold at auction. The purely functional design of the subdivision is of interesting contrast to David Burnham's subdivision of 1855. M.C.



## Town Improvement

Town-directed public beautifications were few, but an attitude of improvement seems to have developed by mid-century, spurred by beautification projects in nearby towns. In 1874 the Stoneham Road Commissioners encouraged the citizenry to plant trees:

We would invite all those who have an interest in our village to plant shade trees along the highways, where they own real estate abutting on any of our public streets. We know that good streets and sidewalks, well ornamented with shade trees, beautifies a village more than anything else we can do. If so, let us all join in this small expense and thus, add to the beauty of our town village.<sup>24</sup>

In 1876, memorial elms were planted near the Town Hall and High School. In 1877, legislation was adopted prohibiting the cutting of ornamental or shade trees "standing in any highway or street" was passed, and town appropriation was made for the planting and maintenance of ornamental and shade trees.

The improvement and upkeep of Lindenwood Cemetery demanded the attention of the Trustees of Lindenwood Cemetery. The Trustees requested assistance in decorating the cemetery, through the erection of monuments and planting of trees, shrubs, and flowers. Amasa Farrier wrote in the 1870 Town Report:

...we would gently hint to a class of our citizens who have not hitherto (with few exceptions) appeared much interested in these grounds — we mean our citizens of ample means — our rich men, whose beautiful lots are few and far between...

Fountain, Lindenwood Cemetery. Photograph 1900. S.H.S.



## Two Views of Stoneham



**View of Stoneham from Cedar Street. Photograph ca. 1870.**  
This panorama, taken from the top of Cedar Street, shows the patterned slate roofs of the Lorenzo Hawkins house and stable. Central Square is at the center of the photograph. The spires of the Unitarian and Congregational Churches are visible. The Dean School and Town hall are also visible.



**View of Tidd Tannery and Emerson Street from Whittier Block, Central Square. Photograph, ca. 1875.** Three houses at center still stand; ten-footer at rear of Emerson Street has been moved to Spring Street. Tannery is present site of Stoneham Public Works Department. S.H.S.



**The Dow Block, 1864. Photograph ca. 1885.** The Dow Block was built by an outside investor, Moses Dow of Charlestown. Prominent in Charlestown financial and political affairs, Dow was founder and editor of the **Waverly Magazine**. S.H.S.

### Second Empire Style Mansions, Cottages, and Commercial Buildings

Following somewhat on the heels of the Italianate styles, and using the same architectural vocabulary, the Second Empire style produced the grandest mansions as well as some of the most picturesque cottages. Characterized by a mansard roof and a variety of rich ornamental detail, the style was also chosen for the design of several Central Square commercial buildings such as the Dow Block of 1864, and the Hersam (Odd-fellows) Block of 1870, and for the Stoneham High School of 1869, situated next to the Town Hall.

It was on the Second Empire houses of Stoneham that the richest materials and finishes were lavished. Roofs were covered in polychrome slate, and etched glass was set into slender, round-arched mouldings. Equally elegant carriage houses were constructed on the grounds of such houses. Most of the Second Empire houses were concentrated along Main Street, and to the west on the hills of Maple and Chestnut Streets.



**Stoneham High School, 1869.** Date of photograph unknown. Later the Dean School. S.H.S.



**Luther Hill Estate, ca. 1855. Photograph ca. 1885.** Shoe manufacturer and inventor Luther Hill's Main Street mansion was one of the finest houses of mid-nineteenth century Stoneham. Built during the heyday of local manufacturers' success, the house and grounds were representative of new standards of taste and cultivation. S.H.S.



**Lorenzo Hawkins House, ca. 1860. 1 Cedar Street.** Hawkins was a prominent local businessman, a manufacturer of machinery. His residence is the best conserved of the nineteenth century industrialist's homes. Both the house and stable are roofed in patterned silver slate, and the rich ornamentation at windows, cornice, and entrances is still intact. Unlike the Boston businessmen of the east shore of Spot Pond, central Stoneham's businessmen chose to build in wood.



**Central Square: Closeup of 1879 Bird's Eye View.** This view shows the close proximity of factories, industrialist's mansions, and workers' houses. S.H.S.

Residential construction in the Boston area was greatly affected by the Panic of 1873, and recovery did not occur for several years. However, in Stoneham additional blocks of workers houses were built in the northeast and southeast sections of town, and a few more homes belonging to prominent businessmen were built along Main Street, in the Italianate and Second Empire styles. Although local tradition has made issue of the "Ability Hill" and "Nobility Hill" notions of residential segregation, Stoneham's people of both wealth and hourly wage lived in close quarters. Shoe manufacturers Charles Brown and John Hill lived "on the hill", but Luther Hill, William Tidd, and Gerry lived along Main Street, in full view of the tanneries and shoe shops, as well as the small houses of the people who worked for them.



**View of "Nobility Hill".** Photograph ca. 1880. This view shows the intersection of Maple and Chestnut Streets. At the left is the well-landscaped estate of shoe manufacturer John Hill; the home of tannery-officer Charles Brown is at the center of the photograph. S.H.S.



John Hill Estate, 1858. Photograph ca. 1890. S.H.S.

Mid-nineteenth century gardening taste was reflected in the landscape design of the estates, now preserved only in photographs. Curving paths and low, massed border plantings covered the grounds, and granite walls circled the estates. The granite walls of the John Hill estate still line portions of Chesnut and Maple Streets, and the entrance gate remains on Maple Street.

The builders of the smaller, mansard-roofed cottage seen throughout Stoneham spared little detail. Most of the cottages were built after the Civil War. Shoemakers such as Charles Gill of Pleasant Street lived in these one-and-one-half or two story frame houses. Gill's building, with its well-detailed window enframements and elaborate exterior millwork, was valued at \$1500 in the same year that C.H. Brown, vice-president of the Tidd Tanning Company, was given an appraisal of \$12,000 of his Second Empire mansion on Maple Street. The Pleasant Street shoemaker did, therefore, enjoy some of the architectural elegance enjoyed by the shoe manufacturer at the other side of town.<sup>23</sup>



Charles Gill House, ca. 1868. 76 Pleasant Street.



**1874 Map of Spot Pond.** Shown at the east side of the Pond are the mills of Haywardville at Spot Pond Brook, and the estates of Boston businessmen. S.H.S.



## Spot Pond: A Special Place

View of Spot Pond, ca. 1915. S.P.N.E.A.

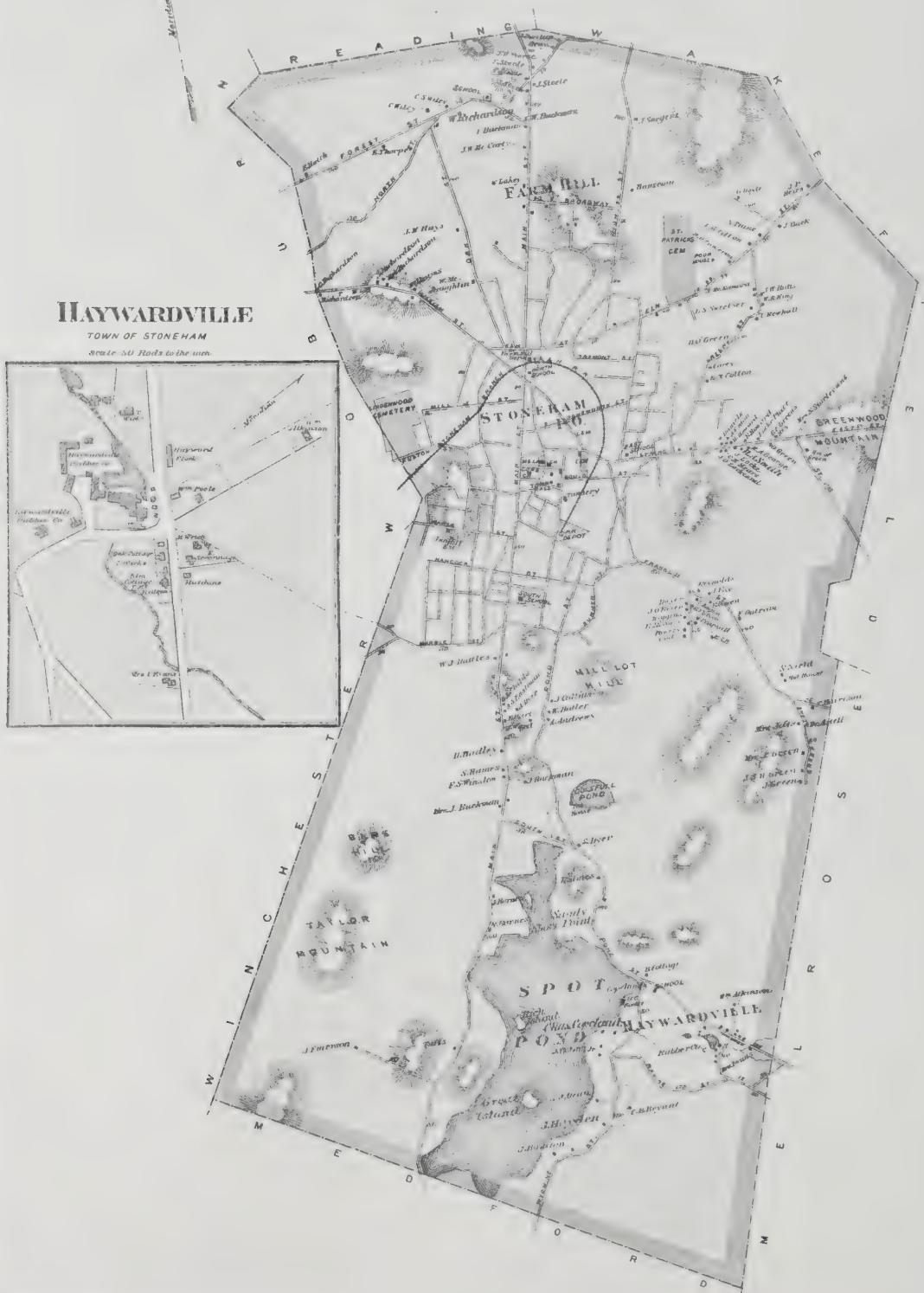
The southern portion of Stoneham, containing 283-acre Spot Pond, reflects a separate chapter of Stoneham's history, including a separate industrial village and residential community.

Governor Winthrop was the first European to visit this portion of the interior of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. On his trip to Bear Hill in 1632, he named the Pond for its many prominent rocks, which he called "spots". About 1645, a mill was built at the mouth of Spot Pond Brook. It was first used as a lumber mill and later as a grist mill.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the entire eastern edge of the Pond belonged to the "Lap Parish", which extended into Stoneham from Melrose and Malden. The area was so-named because of the large number of shoemakers residing there. The name specifically refers to the traditional shoemakers' use of the lapstone. Prior to the construction of the Medford-Andover Turnpike, this was one of the most thickly-settled portions of Stoneham.

# STONEHAM

Scale 100 rods to the inch



Haywardville. 1875 J.B. Beers Atlas Plan of the mills and buildings of Haywardville along Spot Pond Brook. S.H.S.



## Haywardville

The now-vanished village of Haywardville was situated east of Spot Pond. The boundaries of the site are Woodland Road at the west, Pond Street at the north, Washington Street and the Jerry Jingle Highway at the east, and Ravine Road at the south. Spot Pond Brook flows through the center of the area.

William Nicklefield purchased land from Ebenezer Bucknam in 1792, about one-half mile east of the ca. 1645 mill. Nicklefield constructed a road from the mill to Pond Street, and built a snuff mill. In 1798, Thomas Rand built a spice and chocolate mill nearby. In 1811, Thomas Hurd purchased the Rand mill and used it to manufacture satinets. He may have been the first to manufacture this fabric by water power. Hurd later ran a satinet and woolen mill in Lowell, Massachusetts.

In 1813, a silk dyer named Barrett of Malden erected a mill near the corner of Pond Street and the Fellsway. After Barrett's death in 1840, the mill was sold to Eli-sha Converse, who started a rubber mill. The property was sold to Nathaniel Hayward in 1858, and thus began the most important chapter of the industrial history of the Spot Pond area.

Hayward, a former employee of the Eagle Rubber Company, was greatly interested in the potential of a new material, rubber. He missed the discovery of the key step in the vulcanization process (Charles Goodyear reaped the eventual reward) but he obtained the first patent for the manufacture of rubber footwear. His Connecticut factories were the largest rubber footwear factories in the country for many years.

The Red Mills were used as ice-house storage barns, and later cut into sections and transformed into houses. The sections were moved one-half mile east to Ravine Terrace, formerly called Fells Court. The Bucknam House and others were moved to Wyoming Place.

In 1860, Hayward's Haywardville Mills employed thirty men and eight women. The company produced 14,000 rubber boots, 50,200 pairs of rubber shoes, 672 dozen rubber pails and buckets, 64 chamber pots and 500 dozen spittoons valued at \$153,800.<sup>25</sup> When Hayward acquired the Converse factory he operated it as the Haywardville Rubber Works, known locally as the "Red Mills". A spice factory and brass foundry operated on the site as well. A number of houses and a tene-ment were erected for the mill workers. The Red Mills prospered until 1870, when Spot Pond was converted to a reservoir for the towns of Malden, Melrose and Med-ford, The water of the pond was diverted to the towns, and the Mills fell silent. After ten years of lawsuits, claims were settled, but Haywardville was gone.

Above:

"Red Mills" at Haywardville. Photograph ca. 1880. S.H.S.



will leave the Depot in Haymarket Square on the afternoon of the day of date at 2 o'clock and carry passengers in fifteen minutes to the proposed new Depot at South Madras whence they will walk through the Ravine Road road being made which is one mile in extent and ends at Winmar.

All these lots are bounded by the elevated margin of the lake in deep water affording fruit and forest trees on them, some of them covered with trees. The soil is of the richest quality derived from the almost windswept slopes from the road to the lake with springs water at the depth ranging from 10 to 15 feet in some lots and wells in others. The dividing line will probably follow the ridge and evergreen the materials for which abound in the neighborhood. The walls now standing will be wanted for foundations. There

are granite quarries now worked about one mile distant and lumber yards are at Madras near by. The trees are large and well suited for building purposes.

## Estates of Spot Pond's Eastern Shore

By 1840, the eastern shore of Spot Pond, near Haywardville, was considered a desirable place of residence for wealthy Boston businessmen. The first to seek suburban retreat here seems to be Joseph Hurd of Charlestown. Once a merchant, he was described in 1852 as an "amateur philosopher and inventor". **The Rich Men of Massachusetts** estimated his personal fortune at \$200,000, and further observed:

At one time he was in the retail dry-goods line, then an importer, and finally went to France as agent of importers here, and remained there some years. Returned in ill health, and located himself in a romantic spot in Stoneham.

He is likewise an agriculturalist, making many curious experiments in that art, an extensive raiser of sheep. Mr. Hurd possesses a generous flow of spirits, is gentlemanly, affable, and agreeable, in spite of his somewhat eccentric and solitary turn of mind.<sup>26</sup>

### Wyoming

Hurd's land was in Wyoming, overlapping the old locality of "Lap Parish." Wyoming's borders extend from a portion of Melrose, near Boardman's Crossing, to the east shore of Spot Pond into Stoneham. Wyoming Avenue in Melrose, near the eastern shore of the Pond, was built shortly after the railroad was constructed through the area in 1845. The area was described in A.J. Downing's **The Horticulturist** in 1849:

Wyoming is a charming rural neighborhood, six and a half miles north of Boston. Being located on the margin of one of the most picturesque lakes in New England, it has lately become quite celebrated for the variety of its natural scenery.<sup>27</sup>

In the 1840s, Boston businessmen William Foster, James Eaton, and William B. Lang purchased a large tract from Joseph Hurd. Hurd's occupancy of the Wyoming area of Spot Pond appears to have provoked comment, as **The Horticulturalist** noted:

It (the tract) occupies several hundred acres of land, and was once owned by a recluse, whose aversion to neighbors and society caused its rich green lawns, deep glens, foaming cascades, and numerous running streams to remain comparatively unknown for twenty five years...<sup>28</sup>

Foster and Company laid out the tract in lots, from two to eight acres. A deed of July 1, 1846 described the intentions of the developers:

No building shall be erected which shall be used for any nauseous or offensive trade or calling such as that of a Butcher, Currier, Farmer, Varnish-maker, Inkmaker, Tallow Chandler, Soapboiler, Brewer, Distiller, Sugarbaker, Dyer, Bleacher, Laundry, Tinman, Foundry, Smithing, Tavern, Bowling Alley or any other trade or calling which shall be calculated to disturb the quiet or comfort of the neighborhood.<sup>29</sup>

Further mention was made of the landscaping of the site:

The avenues called Virginia Avenue and Gertrude Avenue including the circular spaces at the westerly ends thereof laid down on such plan are always to remain open for the benefit of the public.





William Bailey Lang House, ca. 1848. Photograph ca. 1890.

The lots were offered for sale at auction on July 16, 1846, and the area was well described in an accompanying notice:

All these lots terminate on the clean, stony margin of the Lake in deep water. All have fruit and forest trees on them; some are covered with trees. The land is of the richest quality, screened from sharp east winds and slopes from the road to the lake with spring water at a small depth. Running springs in some lots and wells in others. The dividing lines will probably be of hedges and evergreens, the materials for which abound in the neighborhood. The walls now standing will be wanted for foundations. There is a fine granite quarry now worked about one mile distant, and lumber yards are at Medford nearby.<sup>30</sup>

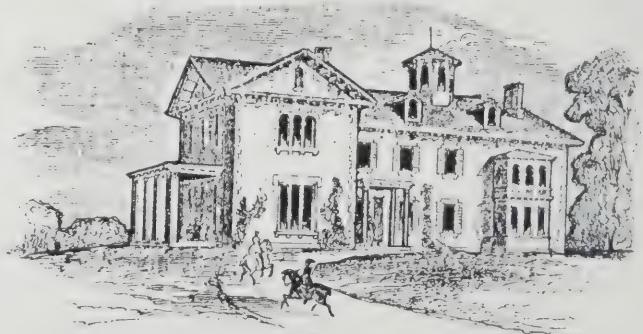
**Highland Cottages at Roxbury.** In the preface, he wrote that he had designed the buildings “as an amusement,” and that his aim was “solely to assist in creating a taste for Rural Architecture.”<sup>31</sup> What he termed his “feeble efforts” were well-executed designs similar to the increasingly popular work of architect Alexander Jackson Davis and landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing.

Lang’s architectural skill was well demonstrated at Spot Pond. He chose to build a villa in the Italian style. The design was published in 1847 in *The Horticulturist*, Andrew Jackson Downing’s “Journal of Rural Art and

### William Bailey Lang and Langwood

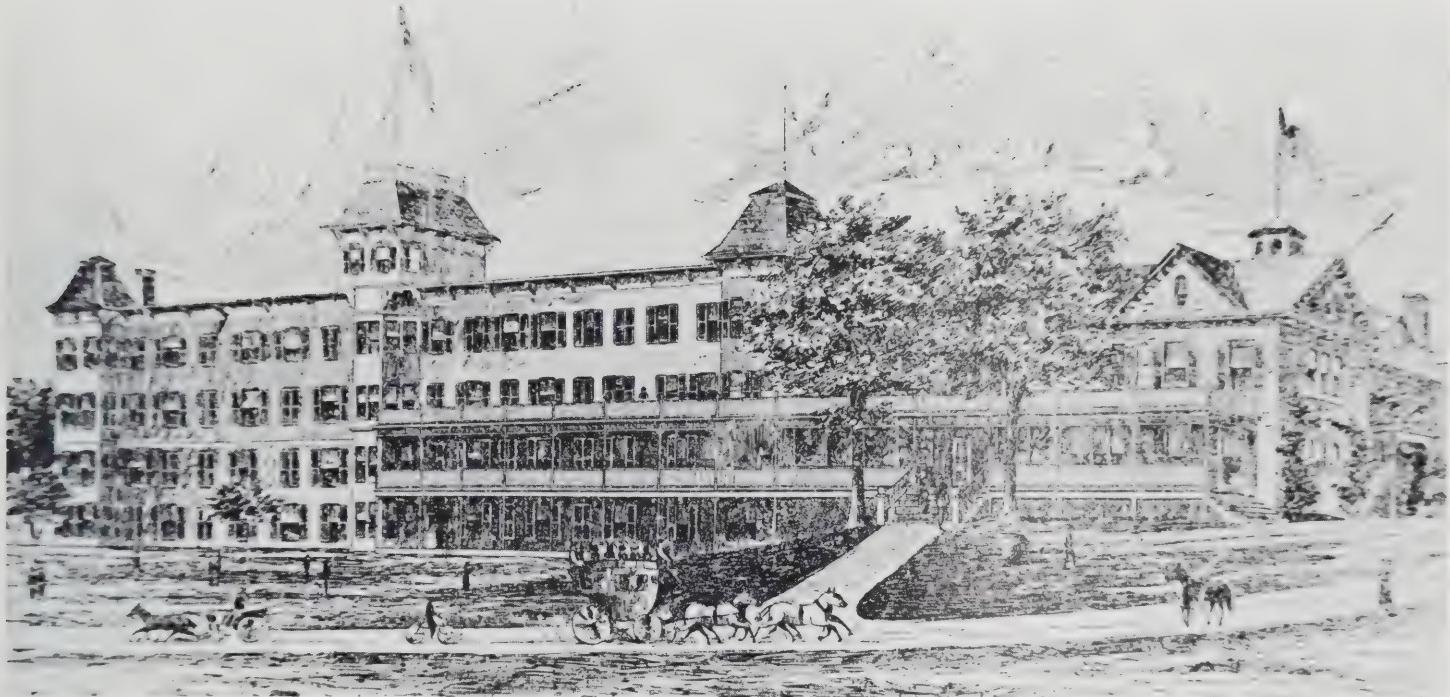
At least three of the houses were built in an elaborate fashion, of locally-quarried granite. William Bailey Lang, a Boston iron and steel dealer, designed his own home for the shores of Spot Pond, on the site of the 1716 house of Anthony Hadley, a farmer. Although an amateur architect, he had considerable experience prior to planning his Spot Pond house.

In 1845, Lang published a series of Gothic style cottages in a collection titled *Views and Ground Plans of*



LANGWOOD

“Langwood.” *The Horticulturist*, March 1849.



The Langwood Hotel. Illustration ca. 1901. S.H.S.

Rural Taste.” The accompanying article described Lang’s house as an “agreeable and commodious villa built of rough stone,” and noted that the engraved view of the house had omitted a “fine background of trees, so that justice is not done to the rural character of the site or the scenery which surrounds this residence.”<sup>32</sup>

Bailey was likely the designer of the John Bottume House, sited near the shore of the Pond. The exterior detailing is similar to Lang’s villa, incorporating a prominent pedimented gable and dentil course with round-arched windows.

In 1867, the Spot Pond Water Company was formed to supply residents of Melrose, Malden and Medford with the pure waters of Spot Pond Reservoir. In 1898, control of the water passed to the Water Board of the Metropolitan District Commission, and in 1901 the M.D.C.

spent \$541,974.36 to drain, clean, enlarge and excavate Spot Pond. Doleful Pond and Dark Hollow Pond were drained into Spot Pond Brook, diverting swamp water that had previously drained into Spot Pond.

The Wyoming neighborhood remained an attractive enclave of estates from the late 1840s into the early 1880s. Some estates changed ownership frequently. In 1878 businessman George F. Butterfield, a native of New Hampshire, moved to Stoneham and purchased the Lang House. With Jonathan Munyan of Worcester, “a wealthy gentleman of unblemished reputation and high social standing,” and Simon Snow, “a retired gentleman of honor,” he built an annex to the former Lang house, renaming the complex the Langwood Hotel.<sup>34</sup> The Langwood Hotel was operated as a summer resort, with a clientele drawn primarily from Boston.

Improvements to Spot Pond. Photograph ca. 1901. S.H.S.



Middlesex Fells Road between Spot and Dark Hollow Ponds.  
Photograph 1900. S.H.S.



. . . at Middlesex Fells the landscape pleases chiefly by reason of the intimate mingling of many types of scenery and objects of interest. Here is a cliff and a cascade, here a pool, pond, or stream, here a surprising glimpse of a fragment of blue ocean, or again a faint blue vision of a far distant mountain . . .

Charles Eliot, quoted in **Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect**, Boston, 1902.

## The Middlesex Fells

The Metropolitan Parks Commission identified the Spot Pond areas as a potential recreational site, and their actions had a profound effect on the area. The Metropolitan Parks District was established in preliminary form in 1892 and included 37 municipalities with a population of approximately one million.

This Metropolitan undertaking came about, wrote Sylvester Baxter in 1885, "in consequence of a strong public sentiment that in order to assure to the public the enjoyment of landscape beauties and the opportunities for ample recreation in the open air essential to the well-being of a great urban population some form of organized cooperation between the various municipal units of the Boston metropolitan group was necessary."<sup>35</sup>

Large tracts of land were acquired for public reservations on all sides of Boston, including 1,583 acres designated as the Middlesex Fells. Sylvester Baxter of Malden, Elizur Wright of Medford, and Wilson Flagg and John Owen of Cambridge were among conservationists who lobbied for the designation of the Fells as a public reservation. Baxter was responsible for the name of the area, first suggesting its applicability to the area in an 1879 Boston newspaper article. In 1893 the town of

Stoneham voted to donate 726.15 acres to the reservation, joining the towns of Malden, Melrose, Medford and Winchester in the donation of land. The once private estates of Charles Copeland, John Bottume, and William Foster were part of the acquisition. The William Bailey Lang house, by now part of the Langwood Hotel, remained in private ownership.

The nationally-known Brookline firm of Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot was responsible for the design of parklands and roads within the reservation, and the firm prepared an exhaustive inventory of the geology, flora, and fauna of the area. Among the conservationists was Warren H. Manning, a landscape architect. In his report to Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot, he wrote of this tract, "one could hardly ask for a more attractive combination of land and water."<sup>36</sup>

Manning's report helps somewhat to determine the extent of timber-cutting in the southern section of Stoneham. In 1895, his report recorded that Virginia Wood near Spot Pond still had one of the best groves of pine and hemlock near Boston, and that fine groups of old cedars existed along Pond Street.

Middlesex Fells, High Service Reservoir, ca. 1905. Photograph ca. 1915. S.P.N.E.A. Thomson and Thomson, photographers.





**Ice cutting at Spot Pond, ca. 1890.** Workers for the Charles C. Jones Ice Company, a Stoneham firm. S.H.S.

## Copeland Estate

Little additional documentation about the appearance of the Spot Pond houses and their grounds is available, but some records indicate that the estates were extensively landscaped. From the initial advertisement describing the vegetation of the site, to valuation book notations about Charles Copeland's rose houses, greenhouses and stables, it is evident that Wyoming was a highly attractive spot.

The Massachusetts Horticultural Society Committee on Gardens paid a visit to Charles Copeland's estate in 1888:

July 24th, the Committee visited the residence of Mr. Charles Copeland, at Wyoming; — this lovely spot borders on, and overlooks on the west, the beautiful little lake called "Spot Pond," giving to the place that peculiar enchantment afforded by a near water view. The grounds contain between five and six acres artistically laid out, and under neat cultivation, — about half an acre, sloping to the north-west, and closed in with an Arborvitae hedge, is devoted to a fruit and vegetable garden; — we noticed the pear trees were of the tall, slim kind, requiring stakes, and ill calculated for our high winds, besides the exposure of a long stem to winter frosts, and the heat of a scorching sun in summer; — the smaller fruits were abundant, and the fruit trees generally thrifty, and another year or two of growth with care and attention will add to the interest of this portion of the estate. At the lower end of the grounds stands a large hot-house with octagon ends; one of which is devoted to the Camellia, and contains several large and costly plants. We like this way of having things by themselves, and we noticed the flowers were planted out, each prominent variety in a bed by itself,

where its beauty could be best seen; — on the borders, and some parts of the ground a greater licence prevailed, and fancy trees and shrubbery were intermingled with plants and flowers, and wanting only time and growth to give increased attraction. Mr. Copeland has a windmill on his barn, which operates a pump that forces water from the pond into a reservoir in the barn loft; — this water supplies a very pretty fountain near the hot-house, and also several jets about the grounds; and is very convenient for watering with a hose. The walks and driveway were neatly kept, and the lawns, grass plats, and flower beds, all in fine order; with so much natural beauty and variety of scenery, and a large amount of artificial and expensive aid, it was gratifying to see that the main chance was not lost sight of, and the economy and thrift was equally combined with a laudable ambition for taste and display.<sup>33</sup>

Copeland's residence was built on the site of settler Timothy Sprague's house, built ca. 1723.

While Spot Pond was becoming a desirable point of residence and recreation, and Haywardville's mills were still producing rubber, brass and spices, Boston's "ice-king" Frederick Tudor, was cutting and shipping ice from the ponds of the Boston area, including Walden Pond, Fresh Pond and Spot Pond. Tudor was the leader of the New England ice industry, and portions of Spot Pond's shore were lined with ice houses. The islands of Spot Pond were also used as sites for ice houses. Tudor's brother Henry married Fannie Foster, the daughter of Spot Pond developer William Foster.



## The New England Sanitarium and Benevolent Association

The Langwood Hotel property remained in private ownership. In 1902, the Langwood Hotel was purchased by Dr. C.F. Coggswell, formerly the port physician of Boston, with the intention of conversion into a hospital or sanitarium. Coggswell sold the property to the New England Sanitarium and Benevolent Association. Established in South Lancaster, Massachusetts in 1899, the Association sought a new location and found the Langwood Hotel and its pond setting highly attractive. In 1905, however, a well-photographed fire destroyed a portion of the former hotel. The stone Lang House, attached to the hotel, was saved. A new hospital building was erected by the Association in 1906, the first of many hospital buildings to be constructed on the site. Today, the Lang House is incorporated into the New England Memorial Hospital's complex of modern buildings and provides an important link to the nineteenth century history of the area.

**The Langwood Hotel (New England Sanitarium).** The fire of January 1, 1905 destroyed part of the hospital building which had formerly served as a hotel. The building was partially rebuilt and served as a dormitory for the School of Nursing. A new building was completed to the north of the burned building and used as the main building of the Sanitarium. S.H.S.



## Change from 1880 to the Turn of the Century



By 1878, the year of the Bird's Eye View, there were 26 firms listed in the Business directory as "shoe manufacturers" with several dozen allied industries, such as box makers, curriers, tanners, and boarding houses. This approximate number would remain steady until the turn of the century, but the company names would change as many men tried to capitalize their skills and those of the local labor force. "Shoe Manufacturer" denoted both John Hill, Jr., with the largest factory, and George Green, with only several employees.

Recovering somewhat from the Panic of 1873, Stoneham's industries showed diversification in the early 1880s, primarily through the E.L. Patch Company which produced chemical and pharmaceutical preparations. Other non-leather industries included pencil sharpeners, carriages, saws, and tennis and baseballs. The baseball manufacturer used the by-products of both the shoe and rubber industries, as well as the skilled hand stitchery of local women shoeworkers.

The 1880s and 1890s were a period of great public investment and improvement, as new suburban development was anticipated. A public water system was installed in 1882, and many public improvements followed. The Board of Selectmen contracted for the first electric street lights in 1890. In 1905 the first Stoneham telephone exchange was installed, with 146 subscribers.

After the arrival of the Stoneham and Wakefield Company's streetcar line, connecting Wakefield and Arlington in the early 1890s, and the Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway connecting Stoneham and Sullivan Square at the turn of the century, portions of Stoneham

began to develop with the homes of a new kind of resident; the businessman or clerk who commuted daily to another city or town, usually Boston. Shoeworkers commuting to Stoneham seem to have been drawn from a closer circle of towns: Woburn, Reading and Wakefield.

Above:

**76 Summer Street: "Ability Hill" house. Photograph ca. 1890.** A small but well-detailed shoe worker's house in the Summer-Pond Street area, sometimes called "Ability Hill." 76 Summer Street has the shingled gable, turned porch posts and decorated bargeboards characteristic of the Queen Anne style.





41 Maple, ca. 1895. "Sunburst" motifs and a variety of shingled surfaces are part of the Queen Anne style treatment of this house; a near-identical example was built at 3 Cedar Street.



196 Franklin Street, ca. 1905. Rustic, stone-faced columns support the overhanging gambrel roof of this early twentieth century house.

## Suburban Architectural Styles: Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Shingle

Stylistically, Stoneham's suburban homes were usually Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, or Shingle style single-family residence with ample porches. The multiple textures and planes of the turrets, gables, towers, porches, and balconies of the Queen Anne exterior often covered a house which was larger than the preceding square or L-shaped Italianate house. The Shingle style demonstrated a smoother-skinned treatment of the exterior, and characteristically the large, heavy volumes of the Shingle style house were clad in dark-stained wooden shingles. Gambrel roofs were often used on the Shingle style house.

With the advent of the Queen Anne style, which was an amalgam of several important stylistic developments, Stoneham also had a new clientele. The shoe factory salesmen, the small factory owners, the hide dealers, and the businessmen of Central Square were building their first or second homes, moving away from the neighborhoods of their fathers. New residents who commuted to other communities to work were arriving as well.

Architects seem to have entered the local scene at this time; at least one local resident maintained an architectural office. The gambrel-roofed residence of Elmer R.B. Chapman at 118 Franklin Street speaks of both the Colonial Revival interest of the period, and the style-consciousness of its architect-owner. Chapman's

architectural office was located in Boston.

The suburban house was often built on hilly sites with views of the surrounding area and a spacious yard which broke out of the tight urban lot system. The suburban house in Stoneham differed from its neighbor in the "village" primarily by site characteristics and landscape design rather than architectural features. Promoters of suburban lots and houses usually emphasize views or other natural ammenities as well as the important transportation link to Boston via streetcar.

Stoneham did develop with some attractive suburban-style areas, but it did not support the enclave of fashionable residences which characterized neighboring Winchester or Melrose Highlands. Part of the reason for this was that a relatively small amount of land was planned or promoted to appeal specifically to the turn-of-the-century homeseeker. Indeed, in 1893, over seven hundred acres of Stoneham's most scenic land was donated to the newly-founded Middlesex Fells Reservation. This land constituted prime land otherwise highly suited for the construction of picturesque suburban homes. Consequently, Stoneham became identified as a public recreational spot rather than a potential private suburban community. In 1906, Stoneham was called "one of the finest outing places in New England" by the promoters of the electric streetcar which ran through the Fells.<sup>38</sup> The eastern shores of Spot Pond and the surrounding public lands offered visitors the same views that an elite group of Boston businessmen had enjoyed in the previous decades.

Opposite:

Trolley, ca. 1915. S.H.S.



## Subdivisions

Beginning in the late 1890s, a number of speculative real estate projects were promoted, many of them by outside investors from Melrose or Boston. Columbia Park, at the Stoneham-Melrose border, and Mount Discovery near Maple Street were among the largest. Characteristically, the new subdivisions were at the periphery of the compactly built central area of Stoneham known as the "village" at the end of the century. Farm Hill, at the top of High Street, sections of the Dike Farm off Marble Street, known as Marble Ridge Park, and Franklin Street near the Melrose border, were popular subdivision sites.

Above:

**Mt. Discovery Subdivision, 1898. M.C.**

Opposite:

**Farm Hill: East Side of High Street. Photograph after 1910.**  
In 1864, surveyors Shedd and Edson laid out a portion of Farm Hill including Collincote Street. In 1890, leather dealer Walter Keene developed another site closer to the top of Farm Hill, including Washington, High, Cowdrey and Keene Streets. Keene's residence was built at 32 High Street. S.H.S.

## Suburban Growth

Stoneham's population reached 6,400 by 1893. "There will be a decided boom in real estate hearabouts in the near future and the man who secures a desirable house or lot in Stoneham at the low prices now prevailing will not only make a safe investment but a very profitable one . . ." promised the 1893 **Descriptive Sketch of Stoneham**, an advertising brochure. This brochure summarized the town's physical ammenties at that time:

The principal advantages offered by Stoneham as a place of residence may be briefly summed up as follows: healthful location, beautiful scenery, low cost of land, moderate rents, pure water, gas and electric lights, excellent educational facilities, well-managed financial institutions, a national bank, a savings bank and a cooperative bank; many religious and social societies, an excellent public library, stores where goods are sold at "Boston prices," a first class and reliable fire service, well kept streets, concrete sidewalks, and an admirable street car service that will soon be greatly extended . . . such a place is sure to steadily and permanently increase in population, wealth and general prosperity, and even the most conservative man acquainted with the character and resources of the town will not think of denying that its future prospects are as bright as its past record is honorable.

Desirable land in and near the business center of the town ranges from five to twenty five cents per foot, and in the outlying regions even lower prices are quoted . . .<sup>37</sup>

Compared to surrounding towns, the services of both steam and electric commuter railway were slow in arriving, however, and various promotional pieces of the period make many apologetic but optimistic references to the difficulties. One writer concluded that "the hills and vales of Stoneham and vicinity interfere somewhat with "rapid Transit" no doubt, but they make this one of the most beautiful and healthful parts of the State and the residents of this section would most certainly not do away with them even if they could . . ."

Business and financial difficulties as well as topographical barriers were at the root of the streetcar problem. By 1900, however, full electric streetcar service to Boston was in operation, and all of Stoneham's public streets had been improved.

The streetcar linked Boston and Stoneham closer than ever before. The few-minute ride coursed through the newly designated Middlesex Fells Reservation, and riders were able to leap off a several unofficial stops to gather mushrooms or enjoy the Fells before hopping the next car. The bright, fast cars of the Eastern Middlesex Railway were known to many as the "Yellow Peril."





In 1897, the Stoneham Town Improvement Association was chartered. Its stated purpose was to "encourage and aid all legitimate efforts for the improvement of the Town, to promote the civic and secular interests of its citizens as a whole, and to make it a more attractive and desirable place of residence."<sup>39</sup> Membership was given to any citizen who paid the annual dues of \$1.50. The sixteen original members included descendants of old Stoneham families, such as Oliver Richardson, Jesse Green, Lyman Gerry, Daniel Hill, and the elderly Silas Dean, active in Stoneham government since the 1840s. New residents, such as Walter S. Keene, a Boston leather salesman born in Maine and described as a "prominent and leading citizen of the town," completed the membership. Among the matters taken up by the Improvement Association were road design, tree care, promotion of real estate, and the attraction of new business to Stoneham. In 1907, the matter of automobiles speeding through Stoneham was addressed. In 1899, the Luther Hill estate on Main Street was discussed as a possible home for the Stoneham Public Library, and acquisition was considered by the Association. A 1903 gift from the Andrew Carnegie Library fund obviated the need for further discussion and a new library was constructed at the corner of Main and Maple, on the former site of a shoe factory. The Luther Hill estate was used briefly as a private hospital and eventually was razed.

The Town Improvement Association seems not to have taken up the matter of public parks for Stoneham, an area of concern for many Improvement Associations.<sup>40</sup>

**Sewer Line Construction up Rowe's Hill, Main Street near Summer, 1911. S.H.S.**

Opposite:

**Tree Cutters, ca. 1890. S.H.S.**





Panoramic View, Central Square. An exceptional view of Central Square taken ca. 1910. S.H.S.

First Baptist Church, 1892. Photograph ca. 1915. S.P.N.E.A.  
Thomson and Thomson, photographers.





By 1900, Stoneham had five churches: the 1840 First Congregational, the 1869 First Unitarian, the 1870 Methodist Episcopal, and St. Patricks Catholic, built in 1887. The last nineteenth century church was the First Baptist, at Main and Hancock, built in 1892. Designed by Brooklyn architects L.B. Volk and Sons, the Romanesque Revival style First Baptist was Stoneham's finest late nineteenth century building. A small chapel built in 1870 on Common Street formerly served the Baptists.

## Stoneham in the Early Twentieth Century



In 1901, a new high school was built on the former site of the William Street Cemetery. Designed by Ritchie, Parsons, and Taylor of Boston, it was the first of several major civic and educational buildings constructed before the Second World War. A Renaissance-style fire-station with a tall Tuscan tower was built in 1916, and the Neo-Classical Stoneham Theatre was added in 1917 in Central Square. While Italianate and Second Empire styles were favored for buildings constructed between 1860 and 1880, the civic and commercial projects after the turn of the century reflected the Renaissance Revival and Neo-Classical styles then popular throughout the country.

A gift of \$15,000 from Andrew Carnegie financed the Neo-Classical style Stoneham Public Library at its present Main and Maple location. The first Library building was constructed in 1903, with an addition in 1931 supported by a \$100,000 gift from the daughter of a partner in the Tidd Tannery, Annie H. Brown. Her philanthropy is of interesting contrast to that of Samuel Webber. Webber, a shoecutter, lived in a small house on Waverly Street. At his death in 1923, at the age of ninety-two, he bequeathed the town \$52,000 for the purpose of constructing a new Town Hall. In 1939, the cornerstone was laid on the Town Hall and Auditorium built with Webber's gift and other funds.

During his lifetime, Mr. Webber saw the rise and decline of the shoe industry in Stoneham. At his death in 1923, there were only three major shoe factories in operation. After World War I, production sharply declined as southern shoe factories overtook the production of the northeast.

John Hill and Company, founded in 1840, became the Stone and Forsyth Box Company, and then J.J. Grover and Sons, (a Lynn shoe enterprise); T.H. Jones, founded in 1888, became Hebert Shoe, also Lynn company; and Patrick Cogan and Son, founded in 1876, continued under the same ownership in their Main Street factory. One half million pairs of shoes were manufactured in 1921. In the 1920s many residents began to find employment outside the shoe industries of the town, and new residents arrived who used Stoneham as a place to live, but not to work.

The electric streetcar established more contact with the entire Boston metropolitan area, and the automobile furthered the transportation revolution. Many Stoneham residents listed a "car" in the Valuation Book of 1912. Gas stations and garages began to appear along Main Street. For a brief period between 1902 and 1908, the Phelps and Shawmut Companies manufactured automobiles in Stoneham, employing nearly 100 men. The Crouch Company manufactured Crouch motorcycles from a small factory on Emerson Street.

Of note to both the history of transportation and commercial architecture is the Main Street gas station built by the Colonial Beacon Oil Company in 1922. Designed by the Boston architectural firm of Coolidge and Carlson, the station is well-conserved, with its Corinthian columns and Classical dome intact. Similar Colonial Beacon Oil Company stations survive in Woburn, Malden, and Boston.

Above: Stoneham Public Library, 1903. S.H.S.



**Metropolitan Water Works, 1904.** Photograph ca. 1915.  
Sheply, Rutan and Coolidge, architects. Thomson and Thomson,  
photographers. S.P.N.E.A.



## A Postscript

This study ends with the early years of the twentieth century, but many observations about changing patterns of land use since World War II can be made. As the shoe factories' production declined, the buildings were converted to other uses or razed. The Hill and Cogan factories became furniture stores. A Town Public Works building was built on the site of the Tidd Tannery on Pine Street. One of the most profound physical changes in Stoneham after World War II was the transformation of Main Street north of Elm Street from a tree-lined mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings to a commercial "strip".

The first American zoning ordinance was introduced in New York City in 1916, to control land use and set building standards. In 1925, Stoneham adopted a zoning plan. The plan established standards for new building construction, and mapped land use districts throughout the town. New industry was confined to the railroad corridor. The retail business core was designated as Central Square, and a portion of Main Street between Middle and Union Streets. Subsequent revision of the plan permitted retail business to stretch from Marble Street to the Reading line.

The construction of the Farm Hill and Redstone Shopping Centers on North Main Street in the 1960s left many stores in Central Square empty. For a time, demolition of buildings perceived as "useless" was considered, illustrative of then-shifting attitudes toward change and the environment. In 1961, the Dow Block and Chase Block of Central Square were devalued in studies evaluating the commercial area of Stoneham. The buildings escaped demolition and in 1978 were called "worthy of revitalization" in another series of evaluations by planning consultants.<sup>41</sup>

Termination of streetcar service in 1946 and the termination of passenger rail service in 1958 resulted in Stoneham's near-total dependence on automobiles. Stoneham's proximity to major transportation routes improved in the 1960s and 1970s, with the construction of I-93, which skirts Spot Pond and bisects Main Street.

The once-residential functions of Main Street have been lost to new retail stores, gas stations and similar establishments. Gas stations seem to have had one of the greatest initial impacts on Main Street of the early twentieth century. A 1950s column called "Who

Above: Main Street, ca. 1948. S.H.S.

Remembers?" in the **Stoneham Independent** repeats a typical chronology:

The Hill family owned a beautiful residence located on the land from Hancock Street north to the north side of Morrill's block. Where the Baptist Church now stands was a beautiful garden with narrow walks and sodded edges around each plot, enclosed with lovely shrubs and the most wonderful wrought iron fence. The home stood about where Day's filling station in now located...<sup>42</sup>

Most of the Main Street mansions built by early industrialists are gone. One, the Brown-Tidd house at Main and Common Streets, has been successfully converted to a funeral home.

New housing built since 1950 in the outlying areas of Stoneham has put pressure on the ancient houses of the first settlement. Many eighteenth century houses built by the first generation of residents were torn down for the construction of housing developments as former farmlands were subdivided. Fragile features of the natural landscape such as wetlands have not fared well, as marshes and swamps were filled for road building and housing projects. Scattered rock and granite outcroppings remain an impenetrable reminder of the landscape of settlement, but suburban homes continue to transform the open spaces of the outlying portions of town. In the center of town, Main Street continues to lose the Greek Revival, Second Empire and Queen Anne Style houses built by the founders of local industry, but the key structures of nineteenth century commerce (the Chase, Dow, and Oddfellows Buildings) remain optimistically intact.



Central Square decorated for Welcome Home Day, June 1919.  
S.H.S.

## **Section Two: Factories and Workers**

George H. Walker Atlas of Middlesex County, Boston 1889







The shoe industry and its related manufactures, including the tanning and currying of leather, have had a singular and powerful influence on the historical landscape of Stoneham. Only a few factories remain in testament, but physical symbols are present in the neighborhoods of worker's houses and in the commercial remains of Central Square, which once served as the town's social, financial, and industrial center. The following discussions of the shoe industry in Stoneham will concentrate on the social characteristics of the nineteenth century shoeworkers' community within Stoneham, and also provide an analysis of the physical characteristics of several shoeworkers neighborhoods.

## The Early Growth of the Shoe Industry

As the nineteenth century opened, Stoneham, Massachusetts was a small, rural settlement. Except for a few descendants of the slaves of colonial days, the 380 inhabitants were people of Irish, Scottish and English extraction who lived and worked on farms carved out by their grandparents and great-grandparents. Each rural family grew most of its own food and made some of its own household goods from local materials. Scattered throughout the town, such craftsmen as weavers, blacksmiths, carpenters and masons produced a variety of goods and services for the community. From the

shelves of the Stoneham storekeepers came goods shipped into Boston or Salem from manufacturing towns in New England, the West Indies, and Europe: clocks, paper, and factory-woven cloth. Stoneham families spent their days working hard at farm and household tasks, journeying into town once or twice a week to attend church or town meeting, or to purchase a few items at the store.<sup>1</sup>

Before the American Revolution, Stoneham families obtained their shoes the way they obtained their clothing: they either made them themselves, or bought them from a neighbor for cash or produce. Making a pair of shoes required eight simple tools — knife, awl, needle, pincers, last, hammer, lapstone, and stirrup. By the turn of the century, the villagers were able to buy well-made shoes from one of the skilled cordwainers who had begun to set up their own shops in Stoneham, concentrating on light-weight women's and children's shoes. Working in his "ten-footer" shoe shop with a journeyman or an apprentice (often his own sons or nephews) such a shoemaker would cut up the leather, construct the shoe and sell his own product to his neighbors. If his efficient crew could make more pairs than could be sold in Stoneham, the shoemaker might load up his horse and transport the shoes to Boston for sale. Boston merchants were beginning to buy American-made goods to sell in the city and to farmers on the frontiers of New Hampshire, western New York and Kentucky, who were too preoccupied with survival in the wilderness to make good shoes.<sup>2</sup>

Above:

**Oliver Richardson House, 1787. Photograph ca. 1880.** Richardson made shoes in the ell of his house on William Street. S.H.S.

As both Stoneham and the nation grew quickly in the early years of the nineteenth century, shoemaking began to grow into the robust industry that would become the heart of local economic and social life. With the establishment of new settlements and the growth of eastern cities, new markets opened up and demand for shoes spurred rapid expansion of shoe production in the town. Skilled Stoneham shoemakers taught their craft to upcoming generations, and as the town's reputation grew, it attracted more shoemakers who formed a pool of skilled labor. These craftsmen exploited natural resources such as local oak and hemlock for tannic acid and cattle hides from Middlesex farms, and took advantage of improved transportation to Boston that came with the Medford-Andover Turnpike, built in 1806. Seeing the opportunities in the growing shoe trade, a group of entrepreneurs began to invest in shoe manufacture, hiring shoemakers all over the region to perform the labor for their new enterprise.<sup>3</sup>

The rise of these shoe manufacturers represented a new form of organization, the central shop, in which the craftsman was a piece-rate worker instead of an independent artisan. In a central shop, the manufacturer employed skilled leather cutters to prepare the shoe stock, which he distributed to shoemaker-farmers in Stoneham and other towns nearby. These families made the shoes in the traditional fashion, returning the completed pairs to the entrepreneur for sale. The shoemaker still used his own skills and his own tools in his own shop, and he still worked in his own household, but he no longer owned the materials or the product. The manufacturer became primarily a businessman, although some of them still labored with awl and lapstone between trips to Boston on business.<sup>4</sup>

In the experience of many of Stoneham's shoe entrepreneurs, one can see the "American dream," the folklore of American capitalism, taking shape. Of twenty-four shoe manufacturers listed in the Census of Manufacturing for 1850, thirteen were born in Stoneham, the sons of farmers or shoemakers. They financed their investment in hometown business not through the large commercial banks of Boston, but through the small banks of Woburn, and, after 1855, through the Stoneham Five Cents Savings Bank. Contrary to what Alan Dawley says about Lynn in his book *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn*, many of the most successful shoe entrepreneurs did start out as shoemakers, going into the retail trade later in order to pay their outworkers in goods rather than in cash. For example, John Hill, born in Stoneham in 1794, began as a shoemaker and owned a store for a few years after 1829, operating it as a tavern as well before turning his building into a central shop to cut and pack shoes in the 1830s. George Dike, born in 1807, began making shoes at the age of 19, purchasing a general store in the 1830s which he ran the rest of his life in conjunction with his shoe business. For Alpha Richardson, one building served as a shoe manufactory, grocery store and dance hall (the last of these resulting in his 1830 expulsion from the Congregational Church for sponsoring "vain amusements.") The characteristic pattern of artisan turned shopkeeper/manufacturer is suggestive of the particular combination of local pride, hard work and

acquisitive ambition which built the large shoe companies of Stoneham. Perhaps more in the small interior town like Stoneham rather than in Lynn, the shoe manufacturer did rise out of the ranks of the experienced artisans.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, one can exaggerate how much the Stoneham entrepreneurs pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps. A sizable minority of Stoneham entrepreneurs were born out of town, and many did go into the shoe trade as purely a business venture, without craft experience. Among those born in Stoneham, those who succeeded in the shoe business tended to start out with advantages. Like Hill and Richardson above, they came from old and landowning families which had sufficient reserves to finance a risky venture. Moreover, Dawley's essential argument holds as true for Stoneham as for Lynn: the entrepreneurs, whatever their early experiences, did exploit the skills and labor of hardworking, historically anonymous shoemakers to build up their profitable businesses.

An example of a businessman/manufacturer was Captain William Richardson, whose account books suggest the outlines of the Stoneham trade between 1817 and 1839. Captain Richardson was not born in Stoneham, although he may have been related to the Richardsons who had owned property in town since the seventeenth century. Whether he had youthful experience as a shoemaker is not clear (he did purchase shoes for himself from a nearby store, not surprising since the local industry concentrated on women's and children's shoes) At the time of these records, Richardson was neither making shoes himself nor operating a store, but acting primarily as an executive by hiring men to "make" and women to bind the shoes. He paid them about every two to six months for the number of pairs which they produced. These workers lived in Stoneham and in immediately surrounding towns: Woburn, Reading, Chelmsford and as far away as Bradford, probably in New Hampshire. Richardson also purchased supplies from a regional network: leather from Medford, Burlington and Charlestown (Woburn was not mentioned in the accounts, although Woburn was an important supplier for Stoneham and Woburn) and shoe boxes from Stoneham and Woburn. For linen to line the shoes, manufactured in New Hampshire, western Massachusetts and further west, Richardson shopped at Taylor's store in some nearby town. Though his sources of labor and supplies were relatively localized, by 1817 Richardson was selling his shoes to merchants in Newburyport, Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Letters from buyers in the 1830s show that he had developed contacts in Ipswich, Bedford, Gloucester, Beverly and elsewhere in New England, as markets in the region expanded and Richardson was able to find customers among local storekeepers in addition to the export merchants.<sup>6</sup>

Richardson's letters show that he participated in the cosmopolitan world of national and international trade. He and his business associates corresponded in the complex cadence of the well-educated merchant class, moving shoes by the hundred-pair lot across the New England countryside and sliding sailing vessels in and out of Boston harbor by the apparent force of their phrases.



"Yours of the 12th inst. is before me, the contents of which having been duly considered I am prepared to say in the first place that I am not disposed to bind myself to receive any number of shoes for any specific time even at the price mentioned, but so long as I can realize a commission by the business so long I purpose to pursue it . . ."

Living as he did in a small country town, Richardson certainly never lived the ostentatious, gracious life that merchants in Boston enjoyed, but within the range of wealth in Stoneham, Richardson was among the well-to-do. In 1849, he owned real estate valued at \$5,267, somewhat more than average for manufacturers and almost five times the average for 26% of the shoemakers who owned any property in 1850. Although little is known about Richardson's personal history, his home probably stood out among the shoemaker's small cottages. He was probably able to furnish that home with the fine wares of a skilled country cabinetmaker and with manufactured goods brought in from the ports.<sup>7</sup>

Above:

**Peter Doucette's Shop, ca. 1850. Photograph ca. 1870.** Peter Doucette and an unidentified man in front of shop behind 19 Emerson Street. Doucette was born in Nova Scotia and came to Stoneham in 1867. Doucette's shop is typical of the small shops or "ten-footers" seen throughout the town until mid-nineteenth century. Doucette maintained his small shop, which also provided shoe repair, at a time when most shoemakers had gone to work in the large, mechanized factories. S.H.S.

What of the shoemakers and binders who worked for Richardson? Unlike a prominent shoe manufacturer, these anonymous citizens left few letters or accounts describing their lives, but bits and pieces of evidence suggest that they occupied a social position a few steps below that of their employer. In contrast . . .

Sir it has ever been my luck to disappoint you as to the making your shoes by the time set . . . and you I expect will make your calculating so as to not to experience another like disappointment. And when I get these Bootes done I will make you good for all error of mine.

yours with much respect,  
Benjamin Hosmer

From the federal census schedules of 1850, a sample was drawn of one out of every four male Stoneham residents employed in the shoe industry, showing property owned, birthplace, and other information. Of the 94 shoemakers (not including cutters or manufacturers) about 74% owned no real property in 1850, and of those who owned some real estate, the average holding was \$1,164.

Flooding into Stoneham in search of work, these workers were a highly transient population. Just 50% of a sample of 94 shoemakers had been born in Massachusetts, 30% came from New Hampshire and most of the rest were native of other New England states or Canada. Of the 94 shoemakers listed in the 1850 census, 44, or 47% had not been included in the tax valuation of 1849, even to be assessed the minimum poll tax for those without property.



**John Hill and Company, Central Square. Photograph ca. 1880.**  
Two buildings originally owned by John Hill and Company are visible in this stereopticon view: the 'central shop' combined with a store and tavern, and the large 'modern' factory

of 1858. The central shop is at center; the large factory is at right. Also of note is the horsecar, center, which ran from Central Square to the railroad station at Melrose Highlands prior to the extension of tracks to central Stoneham in 1861.

This transience was reflected in the shoemakers' housing patterns. In 1850, 53% were living with wives and in, some cases, children, but 32% were single men, boarding either with a family (20%) or in a larger boardinghouse (12%). Among those born out of the state, a full 30% were boarding with families and 19% lived in boardinghouses, while among Massachusetts natives, 62% lived with their own wives and children. That many of these nuclear families also took in one or more boarders, however, shows how boarding helped both the financially strapped shoemaking families and the unsettled wage laborer. Some of the poorest workers would go on to accumulate savings and property by staying around Stoneham: the average age of those without property was 30.4, while the propertied averaged 39.9 years of age. Many others, however, remained tenants all their lives, and others moved on, in search of a better job, or a better wage in another shoemaking town.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to note that these figures apply only to the male shoemakers, for the census takers did not record most women's occupations in 1850. Because women in the same industry worked directly for their husbands or fathers in many cases, as well as indirectly for the shoe manufacturers, they occupied a step yet a bit farther down on the social ladder. Often the women who were hired as binders by Richardson did not even sign for their own wages. Instead a male family member signed for them. Typically a woman's daily wage worked out to about half that of a man, and about the same as that earned by a boy under sixteen.<sup>9</sup> Some women did sign for themselves, and many boarded with

families, away from their homes. These women probably enjoyed an independence and pride not unlike that expressed by the mill girls of Lowell during the same period. Like the textile workers, though, they could not hope to achieve even the economic security and social status accorded their shoemaking brothers.

If the shoemakers of Stoneham were subordinate to the manufacturers in social position, their labor was, nevertheless, the lynchpin of the local economy, and their culture was the culture of Stoneham. When William Stevens, the late nineteenth-century historian of Stoneham, wrote that "in all frankness let it be said we were not a people generally of considerable education, or of high intellectual and social culture, nor were there many citizens of large means," he hit upon the essence of the shoemakers' city. Another partisan of the late nineteenth century noted, "Stoneham always has been (and, let up hope, always will be) a town where people 'work for a living' and are not a bit ashamed of it." Stoneham shoemaking families were the sons and daughters of toil, and their work, their social life and their play revolved around that fact.<sup>10</sup>

## Mechanization in the Shoe Industry

The labors of local shoemakers, the expansion of markets and the efforts of the entrepreneurs made possible the development of a shoe industry of considerable size in Stoneham by 1850. At the small end of the scale,



**Luther Hill.** Luther Hill (1808-1877) was born in Stoneham. An inventor and shoe manufacturer, in 1832 he went into partnership with his brother John in John Hill and Company. Luther is noted for his many patents, including a steam-powered die for stamping out lappets, or tongues, and sole-cutting and counter-skiving machines. In addition to his innovations in the manufacture of shoes, Hill was one of Stoneham's leading citizens and an advocate of business development. S.H.S.

there were in that year eleven shoe businesses with between three and ten employees, some investing as little as \$100 in materials and tools, relying on rented rooms. Six other firms hired between eleven and forty employees, some of these small shops like those of eighteenth-century artisans and some larger networks of outworkers. In 1850 there were seven firms employing between 50 and 130 workers, the largest with an investment of \$30,000.<sup>11</sup>

However, in reading the statistics of the industry in Stoneham before the Civil War, it is easy to forget that this expansion was not the result of "industrialization," if by that one means machinery. Shoe machinery had not yet been invented and without mechanization, the factory system was impractical. Whereas the textile factories of Lowell and Waltham had been humming since the 1820s, the shoe towns boomed entirely as a result of hand labor, the only kind that could handle the intricate process of assembling a leather shoe.

In the early 1850s, the first shoemaking machines appeared on the market: a mechanical stitching machine used to sew together the uppers, operated without power except that applied to a foot pedal. Women began to buy these machines for use at home, but they were put to use most successfully in the central shops, which quickly became small factories. By installing a few of these machines in their central shops, the manufacturers were able to employ women to work at the machines on a regular shift, as the factory hands of the textile mills did. The result was a significant saving in transportation costs for shipping materials and shoes to and from the outworkers, and increased

control over the quality of the work done. In Lynn, the first sewing machines were introduced in 1852, and by 1855, most of the leading manufacturers had begun to use them. Stoneham did not lag behind Shoe City, and the industrial census of 1855 shows that Stoneham already had forty-three sewing machines for shoes. Both large-scale manufacturers like Sweetser and Battles, with more than sixty employees, and small shoemakers like T. Brooks Hadley with three employees and a rented shop, bought the new sewing machines.<sup>12</sup>

In 1858, John and Luther Hill built a large factory powered by steam, leading the way for the industrial revolution in Stoneham. Early in 1859, the *Middlesex Journal*, published in Woburn, declared, "We believe this to be the largest shoe factory in the Union," and memorialized this achievement with a detailed description of the four-story factory, which represented the state of the art in the shoe industry prior to the Civil War.

In the various rooms of the factory, between eight and fifteen separate operations were performed, depending on the style of shoe being produced at the time. The process organized in the most clearly industrial manner was binding or stitching, an operation which took up the entire fourth floor with a room filled with machines for up to 60 female stitchers. The scale of this operation is suggested by the fact that, on one occasion, the room was converted into a ballroom when the owners treated the workers to an evening of entertainment by Wright's Stoneham Band.<sup>14</sup>

Other operations were carried out on a smaller scale. The "Makeing Room," for production of heels, and the clicking room, where uppers were stamped out, were located on the third floor. On the second floor, male shoe workers operated machines for finishing — sandpapering, boning and brushing the shoe — and four pegging machines. One worker, Thomas D. Russel, and the "first perfect pegging machine in the world" which he operated combined their talents to produce one shoe every one minute and ten seconds. On the first floor were located the sole leather room and the machine room, each containing many machines for cutting and shaping the uppers and soles. Besides these operations, the factory included space for storing sole leather, keeping the stock damp, and packing and delivering the finished product.<sup>15</sup>

This large, mechanized factory was a far cry from the small central shops of 1850, but the Hill factory remained in certain ways a small "manufactory", significantly different from either the textile mills of the same period or the fully developed shoe factories of the late nineteenth century. Although a variety of processes were brought together under one roof, two of the most

important had not been mechanized in 1859: bottoming (attaching the soles to the uppers) and lasting (stretching the leather into the proper shape to fit a foot.) Male cordwainers thus continued to perform these tasks as they had in the past, attaching the pieces of the shoe together in their own shops, using materials cut out and now bound in the central factory. The entire work-force of the factory was about 150 people, of whom 60 were women.<sup>16</sup>

In 1862, a breakthrough in the technology of stitching occurred, completing the mechanization of shoemaking and signalling the beginning of the end of the cordwainer's craft. The stitching machine patented by Gordon McKay, whose name identified it, mechanically attached the soles and uppers. Now the manufacturers could set up these machines in their factories, teach shoe workers the simple skills needed to operate them, and give up the practice of hiring independent shoemakers in their own shops. One process, lasting, remained unmechanized until the 1870s, but now that there was no need to ship the shoes back and forth to the bottomers, the manufacturers hired skilled lasters to work in their factories as well. Now skilled cutters and lasters and semi-skilled bottomers, stitchers, and finishers worked together under one roof.<sup>17</sup>

The possibility of becoming a rich and successful shoe manufacturer lured many shoemakers to invest their small savings. Unlike textiles and some other industries, shoe manufacturing did not require large amounts of capital. Not only could one rent just part of one floor of a Central Square building and have plenty of space to set up several machines and get started, but the machinery also could be rented. In the late nineteenth century there were about 100 companies who manufactured and leased shoe machinery. By 1899 all but three had merged or gone out of business, and these combined to form the United Shoe Machinery Company, which leased virtually all the machines used by the American shoe industry. An entrepreneur could start out with only a small amount of capital and realistically hope to grow into a good sized corporation. In the industrial era as in the pre-industrial period, Stoneham manufacturers helped to shape the American dream.<sup>18</sup>

It is worth noting, though, that for every Stoneham success story there was an unknown number of failures. The requirements for capital were few, but in starting a shoe business it helped to have enough cash to finance the periods when orders were scarce and to cover purchases of raw materials before the expected orders were paid for. Not every aspiring shoe magnate had the business acumen to survive the competition. Of twenty-seven companies listed in the Stoneham census of 1860, thirteen were no longer in business in 1870. The R.G. Dun Company, which rated companies as good or bad credit risks, noted the poignant tale of D.A. Fredericks, who sold his stock and went west in 1857, leaving behind a staggering collection of debts. In 1866, R. Locke failed within ten days of opening his shoe business and disappeared from town.<sup>19</sup>

The lives of the shoe workers who were the backbone of Stoneham, their lives were turned topsy turvy by the full-blown industrialization of shoemaking. Where the cordwainer had traditionally organized his routine around the weather and his inclination of the moment,

now the foreman and the machine itself set the pace of the workday. The worker left his or her home to work a regular shift in a factory far from the household, trading off his former isolated but independent life for the cheerfully social, but noisy and tedious routine of the factory. The work itself, always repetitive but certainly creative, became monotonous as the job of making one pair of shoes was subdivided into eight, ten or more tasks. The sheer scale of the new factories dwarfed the individual worker, reducing him to a gear in the huge machine of Stoneham's shoe industry. Manufacturer John Hill became famous, at least locally, while the operative Thomas Russel earned less glory than the pegging machine which he ran.

A good picture of the R.W. Emerson and Co. in 1880 appeared in the *Stoneham Independent*. This description portrays a factory employing about 170 workers, in a three-story plant. The first floor housed the sole leather room, with 17 men and women, "most of whom run machines of some sort." On the third floor was found "one of the busiest parts of the building," the stitching room with 70 machines and 80 to 90 operatives. In between labored the "shoemakers," their ancient title failing to capture the radically new nature of their work. The description of the shoemakers' room is worth quoting in detail:

When the uppers come down the elevator from the stitching room they are deftly handled by men who draw the upper over the toe, put in the inner-sole and stiffening, and then passed to the lasting machines, from thence to the peggers, then to the tack-puller, and next to the last-puller. Then every shoe is placed on the levelling machine, and after passing through the hands of the edge trimmer and edge setter they are tied up in pairs. Then they are conveyed on horses to the sand-paperer, who smooths the shanks, and passes them along to the healer, who, by the aid of the McKay healing machine, can heel from eight to ten cases a day. The heel burnisher then polishes the heel, after which they are again taken to the sand-papering machine, where the bottome is finished. Lastly the shoe is found in the hands of the beveler, where the shanks are bevelled or blacked. From this room the shoes are taken to the packing room. The shoe undergoes all the above processes in one large room the whole length of the main building about 140 feet by 30. The workmen are so nicely arranged around the room that from the time the upper passes into the hands of the first workman it goes from hand to hand until it reaches the packing-room, which is situated in the second story of the new part.

Not every one of these minute steps was done by a machine. Trimming the edges and blacking the shanks, for instance, were done by hand — but the entire process had been broken down to suit the rhythm of the machines. It is significant that in this article, not even one operative is mentioned by name, singled out like Mr. Russel had been in 1858. Instead, the stars of the factory were now the engineer Frank P. Harris, John C. Paige who designed the steam boiler, and Mr. M.J. Ferren, the shop machinist who repairs and in some cases invents machines as needed. The foreman in charge of each room are named, but only one, Mr. B.R. Rowe in the cutting room, "A veteran, eagle eyed judge of leather, and a good judge, too" won credit for his skills as a craftsman.<sup>20</sup>



## Class, Culture and Industrialization

What was the impact of technological revolution and economic boom on the social relationships of the small country town of Stoneham? In his book on Lynn, Alan Dawley portrays a breakdown of the ties which bound farmer-shoemakers and manufacturers together. A new workforce, mostly without ancestral roots in Lynn was drawn into the factories, where its daily labor built great fortunes for a few entrepreneurs. These factory laborers ranged from "the poor (to) the less poor," as a growing gap between the status of manufacturers and workers turned the worker into class-conscious, militant proletarians by the 1870s.<sup>21</sup>

If the industrial revolution sharpened the division between workers and bosses in Lynn, the largest shoe-manufacturing center, the same process may have occurred on a smaller scale in Stoneham. On the other hand, the small town may have somehow remained isolated from the severe dislocations of industrialization, remaining close-knit and relatively free from conflicts. Reality, as is so often the case, lay somewhere in between. In the first place, long before shoe machinery made possible the large shoe factories, workers had been flooding into Stoneham to go to work for the earlier manufacturers like Captain Richardson. They came Above:

Peter Doucette and Family, ca. 1875. S.H.S.

from New Hampshire, Maine or Vermont, from Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, or from other parts of Massachusetts; they were not necessarily committed to staying in Stoneham more than a year or so. In addition to these transient Americans, the 1850s saw a significant immigration of Irish men and women, not to work in the shoe factories, as yet unbuilt, but to take advantage of jobs in construction, tanning and currying and domestic service. These unskilled workers, fresh from the famine-stricken farms of Ireland or the streets of Boston, along with a surprisingly large group (over a third of the men) of Irish cordwainers, did not necessarily feel a part of Stoneham's predominately Yankee culture. They brought with them their own Catholic religion and their attachments to friends and relatives far away. Nor did they always expect to become independent, propertied citizens in the tradition of the Yankee yeoman, for even these shoemakers in their shops probably knew that as transient workers in a large industry, many would never be able to save enough to settle in Stoneham even if they chose to.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, as we have seen, there were sharp class divisions between manufacturers and cordwainers even in 1850. For those owning some real property, the average manufacturer owned \$4,625 worth of property and the average cordwainer \$1,164, with the only propertied cutter falling between with \$2,000. But, with the mechanization of shoemaking and the growth of the large factories, the gap widened. Whereas in 1850 the average property holding among manufacturers was 4.0 times that among shoemakers, in 1870 manufacturers



held 5.9 times more property than factory workers. In terms of wealth, factory workers were in about the same position in 1870 as shoemakers of the previous generation: 26% held property in 1850, 28% in 1870, but the manufacturer's role was much more lucrative and elite in 1870 than in 1850. Four out of the eight manufacturers in the 1850 sample owned no real property at all. Men like Samuel Cloon, 32, who took in two shoemakers as boarders and paid only a poll tax, and Sumner Richardson who at 34 lived with his parents on their farm, as well as such men as George Dike with his Irish servant and his \$5,500 in real estate, were all known as manufacturers in 1850. In 1870, each of the manufacturers in the census sampled owned at least \$1,500 in real property. For example, William Messer, near the bottom in wealth, owned a shoe factory worth \$2,000, machinery worth \$1,500 plus land and his own home. William Battles, listed in the census as owner of \$10,000 in real property and \$30,000 in personal goods, was taxed for \$19,000 in real property including a shoe factory, three houses and over 50 acres of land. Lyman Dike, with \$30,000 in real and \$30,000 in personal property, owned a stable, carriages and grapery in addition to his home and over 90 acres of land.<sup>23</sup>

The gaps in wealth which these figures suggest were also reflected in cultural cleavages which separated Stoneham residents along class lines. A factory worker typically labored 60 hours per week, arising with the factory bell to get to the shop at 7 A.M. and to work until about 6 P.M. six days a week during the busy season. In midsummer and midwinter, the factory would

Above:

Luther Hill and Family, ca. 1875. S.H.S.

lay off most operatives or close down, leaving the shoemaker to supplement his savings with extra work in construction or around the railroad yards during the enforced vacation. If he were single, a factory worker was likely to board in a boarding house with other shoe workers, curriers, or laborers, staying on indefinitely if work was steady or leaving after a short stint if a better job could be had elsewhere. A married worker would rent a small frame house of five or six rooms, or he might be among those who owned their own homes. Though few married women in Stoneham worked outside the home, the wife of a factory operative was likely either to do shoe binding at home (as late as 1855 women were so employed, at lower pay than factory stitchers), to sew baseballs at home for the Hipkiss factory, or to take in boarders to earn money for the household. The children of operatives attended grade school, but by age 12 or 14 they were likely to drop out to get jobs in factories. Few attended high school. As for entertainment, a factory worker's options were circumscribed by his tight budget. Because his fellow shoemakers were all in the same position, however, they found ways to have fun. A short walk led from the town center to the countryside of Middlesex county; the trade unions, ethnic clubs and fraternal organizations put on picnics and dances. During the slow seasons of the shoemaking business cycle, workers formed the Stoneham Dramatic Association and put on plays like "Idiot Witness" and the homegrown farce, "Stoneham Horse Railroad, or The Omnibus." And when times were hard, Stoneham workers made an "institution" of surprise parties, appearing at the home of an unemployed worker bearing "an agreeable surprise of the good things in life, not forgetting occasionally a respectably filled purse."<sup>24</sup>



Brackett Shoe Factory and Workers. Photograph ca. 1890.  
S.H.S.

A cutter enjoyed a more secure life because his skills earned him a place among the highest paid, most respected workers in the factory. A cutter's workday began early and ended late, but his work was less monotonous than that of an operative, demanding a sharp eye to take the measure of a piece of leather and a deft hand to divide it with the least possible waste. A cutter in 1870 was likely to own his own home (75% were property owners), perhaps a somewhat larger one than the factory laborer's, and he might be able to afford such middle-class amenities as a piano or a horse and stable. His wife did not need to work outside the home, and his children probably finished at least a year or two of high school before looking for work in the shoe shops, perhaps as apprentices in the skilled trades practiced by their fathers. A cutter enjoyed the same simple, locally based recreation as the operative, but he could afford occasionally to travel to Boston on the train, to shop or visit relatives.

In contrast to these workers, the manufacturers lived comfortably and graciously. A manufacturer's workday was long, but his routine provided variety and responsibility, and his work took him frequently into Boston or Salem to confer with associates. A manufacturer was likely to own one of the largest homes in Stoneham; an Irish servant girl was often responsible for the housework. These households rarely included the transient operative who so often boarded in the homes of the less affluent Stonehamites, though occasionally one of the manufacturers would board the son of another factory owner while the young man learned the shoe business. The manufacturers often sent their children to Stoneham High School, or to private academies, until the sons were ready to take positions in the fac-

tory offices or on the shop floor, learning the trade from the bottom up. Naturally, the manufacturers' families enjoyed more expensive forms of entertainment than their employees; they owned carriages and stables, they could afford to attend the theater and the opera, and their parties were stylish affairs in which one manufacturer's family socialized with another, much like the operatives at their own parties.<sup>25</sup>

In this way, industrialization divided Stoneham into classes with different cultures and standards of living. At the same time, in contrast to residents of industrial cities such as Fall River or Lynn, Stoneham's people continued to share a common culture and the kind of familiarity characteristic of a small town or the farming community which Stoneham had once been. Ethnic homogeneity helped to make this possible. In 1875, 84.5% of Stoneham residents were natives of the United States (57.6% had been born in Massachusetts) and 9.2% who were born in Ireland made up the only major minority ethnic group. 3.5% had been born in Canada, 2.5% in England or Scotland; Germans, Swedes, or other groups made up less than 1% of Stoneham's population. As a result, the small ethnic neighborhoods typical of larger industrial cities did not develop, and all Stoneham residents tended to trade together along Main Street. Nor was housing segregated along class lines. Although shoemakers did tend to live in clusters of small homes in the Tremont Street and Warren and Wright Street neighborhoods, their bosses built homes nearby within a short walking distance of the factories. Because Stoneham companies did not choose to invest in corporation housing for their workers, the operatives' families were not artificially separated onto class-segregated streets.<sup>26</sup>



The small scale of many of the shoe companies also helped to mitigate divisions between different groups in the town. In 1870, fully half of the male workers in Stoneham worked for firms with twenty-four or fewer male employees.<sup>27</sup> The viability of the small shop turning out a few cases of shoes a week encouraged upward mobility, as workers saved to invest in their own small business. The vast majority of workers never got that far, and many who did failed, but the possibility tended to keep Stoneham operatives from defining themselves as entirely apart from the manufacturers. Besides, in many of the smaller shops, the owners themselves not only directly supervised the work on the shop floor, but probably did some work themselves. While the workers were certainly aware which men were the workers and which the bosses, this kind of personal interaction helped to limit hostility and encouraged a sense of common purpose among everyone associated with a factory.

In fact, the difference between a “good boss” and a “bad boss” eased tensions in any industrial town, and Stoneham was no exception. Some of those who managed the factories maintained close, friendly relationships with their workers, attempting to pay them decently and to organize the work in ways that suggested respect rather than exploitation. In the 1880s, the *Stoneham Independent* reported two incidents which show how some workers felt about their good bosses. When Stephen Green, foreman of the sole leather room at Sanborn and Mann for many years, gave up his position for health reasons, the “hands” who worked for him assembled at his home one evening, bringing with them a gift of “a handsome easy chair.” Similarly, shoe manufacturer F.W.B. Worthen was invited for a social evening with his wife at the home of one of his neigh-

bors. When he arrived, he was surprised by “nearly all of his operatives” who presented him with a gold watch chain. Though these incidents were exceptional enough to make the local newspaper, it is also notable that these surprise parties given for a popular boss were very similar to the way workers traditionally helped one of their own number survive hard times.<sup>28</sup>

## The Labor Movement in Stoneham 1860 – 1880

In Stoneham more than in the largest shoe centers like Lynn, a lack of ethnic and residential segregation, the small size of some shoe shops, and the experience workers had with some “good bosses” eased class tensions and helped preserve some of the friendly good relations of the small country town. Nevertheless, the industrial revolution brought to Stoneham a labor movement as vigorous as that which grew out of the Lynn shoe industry. Class-conscious and militant, Stoneham workers acted early and boldly to defend their interests through unions and political action. When labor organization wanted, Stoneham workers turned to another kind of movement, cooperation, and developed it with a degree of success unique in New England. Far from clinging to conservative or paternalistic values, shoe workers in Stoneham turned their cultural homogeneity and sense of common purpose to the creation of strong working-class institutions.

Above:

*Brackett's Shoe Factory. Illustration from the 1893 Descriptive Sketch of Stoneham. S.H.S.*

In the spring of 1860, a year which had seen the expanded use of the job-threatening sewing machine and widespread wage cuts and layoffs in the shoe industry due to recession, the Great Shoemakers' Strike swept the shoemaking towns from Lynn up and down the North Shore and inland to Middlesex County. Demanding a living wage and asserting their rights as producers and workers, the shoe workers of Lynn, male and female, led a three month walkout. Huge processions in the streets and the intervention of state militia and out-of-town police marked the bitter strike.

When representatives of the Lynn workers travelled to Stoneham to enlist support, local shoemakers responded with a show of solidarity tempered with caution. On March 3, 1860, the *Middlesex Journal* reported that the town's shoemakers "are wide awake and perhaps will imitate Lynn." After a series of three mass meetings, on March 10 the enthusiastic urgings of its leaders roused the group to pass a resolution to strike, even before a committee appointed to poll the shoemakers in town had had a chance to act. During the next week, only 40% of the workers polled favored the strike, so the workers took another vote. The resolution carried again, bringing on a month-long strike in Stoneham. When on March 16 more than 6000 strikers and supporters took to the streets of Lynn for a parade, a fire company from Stoneham was among them.<sup>29</sup>

The strike was most successful in expressing in a festive manner the workers' pride in themselves as "sons of toil," rooted both in the traditions of small-town artisans and in the new needs of industrial workers. On one occasion during the strike, 300 to 400 Lynn shoemakers made up a procession travelling from Lynn to Woburn to Stoneham, accompanied by fire companies from the two small towns. Following a dinner with speeches and a performance by the Lynn Cornet Band, the fire fighters with their noisy and colorful fire wagons escorted the Lynn contingent home via Reading and Lynnfield, where other shoemakers no doubt greeted them. Afterward, the Stoneham workers gathered with their Woburn brothers for even more revelry before the visitors headed homeward. The shoemaker's solidarity and flair for pomp and circumstance, however, was not sufficient to win their wage demands. As in Lynn, Stoneham workers were forced to return to work by the end of April, having received scattered pay raises which scarcely made up for the wages lost in weeks without work.<sup>30</sup>

Following the Great Strike, the 1860s were quiet years for the labor movement in the shoe industry. The issue on all American's minds, the Civil War, overshadowed industrial discontent. The rapid expansion of industry and the widespread acceptance of the sewing machine dampened workers' hopes of maintaining their status as skilled craftsmen, at the same time opening up plenty of jobs for those willing to go to work in the factories. Late in the decade the first movement to address the concerns of factory workers took shape — a trade union called the Knights of St. Crispin after the patron saint of shoemakers. Originating in Milwaukee in 1867, the Crispins recruited thousands of members in Massachusetts within two years to become the largest national trade union in a period of rising unionism. In Lynn, the Crispins recruited at least half of all the shoeworkers and staged a successful strike in 1870, resisting a wage cut through collective bargaining. The loss of a second Lynn strike in 1872 brought a wage cut and a blacklist of strikers, but the Crispins remained an important influence on national labor reform movements, including the emerging Knights of Labor after 1880.<sup>31</sup>

The activities of the Crispins in Stoneham are clouded because the historical sources are lacking for that period. The city directory of 1869 shows that in 1867, the first year the union existed nationally, the Pioneer Lodge of the Knights of St. Crispin, No. 8, had emerged in Stoneham. By 1874, when the next directory was published, the group had disappeared, foundering like the Lynn local during the depression after 1872. But in the meantime, local Knights had participated in the founding of a shoemakers' cooperative, described in detail later. And they had provided, however briefly, some organizational form for the growing class consciousness of Stoneham workers.<sup>32</sup>

If the paucity of sources and the well-known activities of the Lynn chapter make it difficult to glimpse the Stoneham Crispins clearly, no such problem exists for the militant women of the Stoneham shoe industry. They were in the forefront of the movement known as the Daughters of St. Crispin, organized in 1869 and the first women's trade union to achieve national success. Besides working closely with the Knights to further the mutual goals of workers, the Daughters pressed for the unique interest of women, demanding equal wages for equal work. Stoneham organized the Excelcior Lodge, No. 2 in February 1869, and proceeded to take a leadership role in the national organization. The convention of 1870 was held in Stoneham, and in that year and again the next, two Stoneham women, Martha Walbridge and Mrs. Frances Jones, were elected First Grand Directress and Grand Secretary respectively. In 1872, the Daughters led a strike against three Stoneham factories, occasioned by the failure of the factory owners to provide a promised raise in wages for a certain kind of piece work. Three hundred Daughters stayed off their jobs for two weeks, subsisting on strike benefits from the national union. By the end of that period, the companies were threatening to hire scabs to replace them, and the leaders of the strike recommended that the strikers return to work. In an ignominious defeat, the Stoneham leaders were blacklisted, faced with the choice of doing "inferior work" as outworkers at home or leaving town to find a factory job. In the 1874 city directory, neither Frances Jones nor Martha Walbridge is listed. The Daughters survived into 1873, at which time they were donating a wax thread machine to the new shoemakers' cooperative. By 1874, they had disappeared as a Stoneham organization.<sup>33</sup>

Both the Knights and the Daughters were vigorous but short-lived groups, unable to win significant gains for their members or to hold them together organizationally through hard times. Equally short-lived but more notably successful, especially in Stoneham, was a political party which was closely related to the Crispins, the Labor Reform Party. Evolving out of a congress of trade unions, the National Labor Union, in 1868, the Party was most active in Massachusetts, where Crispin leader Samuel Cummings was elected president of the state organization. In 1869, the Massachusetts Labor Reform Party laid out a platform demanding the eight hour day for certain state and city employees and a ten hour day for women and minors, a national department of labor, certain populist financial reforms, and — in a bow to the fears of shoemakers for their jobs — a rather racist demand to end immigration of low-paid Chinese workers. Edwin M. Chamberlain, a prominent labor reformer known for his enthusiasm for cooperatives, was nominated for governor and the Labor Reform Party fielded candidates in many state legislative districts.<sup>34</sup>

Statewide, Chamberlain won about 10% of the vote, but in Stoneham he led the field with 48% — 262 votes to 209 for the Republican and 75 for the Democratic candidate. Furthermore, Stoneham elected Labor Reform candidate Samuel C. Trull to the State House. Trull, a shoe pegger and finisher, was corresponding secretary of the local Crispin lodge.<sup>35</sup>

In 1870, the Massachusetts Party ran nationally prominent reformer Wendell Phillips for governor. Phillips, who won 15% of the statewide vote, received 66% of the vote in Stoneham — 332 votes to far outdistance the Republican with 128 votes and the Democrat with 45. (Other towns voting for Phillips were Lynn and Marblehead, both shoe towns.) The party affiliation of the representatives elected from Stoneham that year is lost to history, but one, Samuel Cloon, was a shoe cutter and the son of a cordwainer. Statewide, the Labor Reform Party peaked that year, winning only 7000 votes from E.M. Chamberlain in 1871 compared to the 22,000 votes Phillips received in 1870. The Democrat, John Quincy Adams, won handily. But in Stoneham, Chamberlain carried the district again, winning 44% of the vote: 206 votes to 110 for Adams and 145 for the Republican. Even Shoe City, Lynn, did not maintain this kind of strong support for the party of the Crispins, turning out almost twice as many votes for the Republicans as for the second-place Chamberlain. Given an opportunity, Stoneham workers turned out in consistent support of candidates who spoke out for working men and women.<sup>36</sup>

With the defeat of the striking Daughters of St. Crispin and the demise of the Labor Reform Party, Stoneham shoeworkers entered a difficult period. Their organizations were in disarray, and in 1873 the national economy went into a severe depression. The shoe industry, always subject to sharp seasonal fluctuations, now faced cutbacks, layoffs and factory closings. In Stoneham, orders for new shoe shipments dropped, and manufacturers let some workers go, instituted wage cuts, and in more than one case, went out of business. A sympathetic news editor noted that wage cuts brought no talk of reducing the cost of provisions, rent or taxes: "The winter's wind bites as sharp as ever, and the poor man grows poorer every day." A shoemaker calling himself "Chum-Chum" complained about the pinch: "The way the shoe business is going here in this town, the shoemakers will belong to the shoe manufacturers, body and soul, in a few short years."<sup>37</sup>

Some Stoneham workers, including "Chum-Chum," agitated for more active unions. Calling for a new workers' organization, he expressed disillusionment with the movements of the years around 1870. "Let us . . . take into our organization nothing but men — none of the old political hacks who killed the Crispins, after they got all the office they could." In reply to this letter, "Shoemaker" agreed, "Let us organize at once, and try to regulate the shoe business, so that one shoe manufacturer cannot cut down his shoemakers, to undersell another, as has been done in this town this present winter." Whether the shoemakers of Stoneham organized such a group after 1875 is not clear. There may have been a chapter affiliated with the regional revival of the Crispins in 1875 and 1876, but if so it never had much influence in setting wages; nor did it last until 1882, when the third city directory was published.<sup>38</sup>

# Producers' Cooperatives 1870 – 1895

With the decline of the trade unions in the mid-1870s, some Stoneham workers began to build a different kind of movement which earned a unique reputation for the town. That movement was producers' cooperation. By organizing their own worker-owned and operated shoe factories, these groups hoped to gain greater control over their economic lives. For some, these shoe cooperatives were seen as a full fledged alternative to an exploitative wage system. For others, they were small islands in the choppy sea of capitalism, where the worst abuses of the wage system would be ended and a more humane form of social relations substituted for capitalist individualism. Whatever their aspirations, the two Stoneham shoe cooperatives founded in the 1870s and the two begun in the 1880s achieved a remarkable degree of success. In 1886, the Bureau of Statistics of Labor could declare, "their business is so extensive . . . that it may be said to constitute the chief industrial feature of the place."<sup>39</sup>

The Stoneham cooperators represented a cross-section of the workforce, apparently typical workers who saw a realistic chance to put an idealistic vision into practical use. Each of the cooperatives began when a group of workers, helplessly facing layoffs during a depression, decided that they could find steadier work by organizing their own company. They took advantage of the fact that with a minimal amount of capital, one could rent a few rooms, lease machinery, and go into the shoe business. The group which founded the first cooperative in 1873, the Stoneham Cooperative Shoe Company, included workers skilled at the various tasks in shoemaking: as they were listed in the 1869 directory, they were ten shoemakers, two shoe finishers, one shoe pegger, two sole cutters, two shoe cutters and one engineer; six others were not listed at that time. One of the stockholders who soon became the group's agent, or business manager, was John Best, who had been financial secretary of the local Knights of St. Crispin in 1869. The ties of this group to the Knights, in fact, were organizational as well as inspirational, as two stockholders, S.H. Heseltine and John F. Lamson, represented the Knights lodge "by trustee." The other cooperatives may not have had official ties to the unions, but they operated on similar principals. They began with a core of workmen who took jobs in the cooperative factories, then sold additional stock to nonshareholders to raise the \$10,000 capital they needed. To fill the remaining jobs, they hired outside workers.<sup>40</sup>

It is not easy to describe exactly how each cooperative organized its finances at first, or how each changed to cope with financial exigencies. The general patterns emerge, however. The Stoneham Cooperative was incorporated in 1872 with 40 shareholders who paid \$250 per share; 25 of these were working stockholders and the rest were solicited to purchase additional shares. Although the original list was all male, in 1886 five of the working stockholders were reported to be women. The total number workers in the early cooperative factory was 15 to 20 men and 20 women. Organized in 1875, the Middlesex Cooperative Boot and Shoe Company had in 1886 a shareholding collective of 21 men

and 3 women, who hired 6 male and 12 female employees. The American Cooperative Shoe Company began in 1882 with 38 stockholders; in 1886 they had a nucleus of 11 male of 11 female stockholders at work at the factory, along with 14 male and 9 female employees who did not own stock. The cooperatives sold shares to 69 other people. At the Franklin Cooperative Shoe Company founded in 1883, a group of 37 stockholders grew to 69 by 1886. Of these, 20 men and 6 women were employed at the factory with 2 to 4 male and 8 female workers.<sup>41</sup>

Overall, the Stoneham cooperatives accomplished a good deal. They made genuine efforts to provide steady work, to eliminate the jolting ups and downs of seasonal employment and periodic depression. In 1886, a prosperous year, both the young Franklin Cooperative and the established Stoneham Cooperatives were running full time year round, except for a customary ten-day vacation in the summer. When in 1875 the Stoneham concern encountered a dearth of orders, the stockholders voted to make up a lot of shoes to be sold at auction for whatever price they would bring. The loss would be deducted from the workmen's wages, but in true cooperative fashion, the deduction would be spread equally among the employees and no one would be laid off. The worker-owned enterprises regularly hired its management — agents and foremen — from the ranks, providing business experience to untrained shoemakers. In one of the ironies of these collective enterprises operating in a capitalist society, at least two such upwardly mobile employees used their cooperative experience to open up their own shoe companies. John Best went into independent business only after the Stoneham Cooperative collapsed, but Frank Bryant left the Cooperative to start his own factory in direct competition with his former partners. Competition notwithstanding, the Stoneham Cooperative lasted from 1875 to 1891, the American Cooperative from 1882 to 1889, and the Franklin Cooperative from 1883 to 1887. The *Boston Globe* wrote in 1889 that Stoneham was "really the only place where (cooperatives) have had such thorough success."<sup>42</sup>

The cooperatives experienced some serious problems in their efforts to create an alternative to capitalist production. First, they had difficulties raising enough capital, and once they raised it, they were always short of cash. In the case of the Franklin Cooperative, the group lost \$500 in six months because it could not pay its bills quickly enough to receive the discounts of 5% to 15% which were customary in the shoe industry for prompt payment. Sometimes suppliers were reluctant to extend credit to the cooperatives under threat of boycotts from competing companies. Suppliers apparently were suspicious that the Stoneham Cooperative would "be controlled by a trade union or managed by a trade union interest," a danger which seems exaggerated in light of the weakness of the unions in the late 1870s. When the cooperatives could not obtain credit, precious capital was tied up until the cooperative's own goods were sold and paid for, a risky business. Both the Middlesex and Stoneham Cooperatives, however, overcame these difficulties and achieved good credit reputations. The R.G. Dun Company declared in 1881 that "all regard (the Middlesex Cooperative) as a thrifty and well managed concern and quite satisfactory to do business



**Libby and Hopkins Factory, ca. 1860.** Three story, flat roofed construction of this factory is representative of the construction of the small, machine-run factory. Located on Montvale Avenue, this building later became the E.L. Patch Pharmaceutical Company. S.H.S.

with, and would readily fill their orders." As for the Stoneham Cooperative, in 1888, "they are doing a careful business . . . in first-class standing and credit."<sup>43</sup>

Other problems arose from the attempt to create democratic lines of authority. The cooperatives appointed agents and foremen to supervise the workers, but they expected a higher degree of self-government for the workers than a supervisor in any other industry would tolerate. After all, some workers were owners of the concern and thus, through the board of directors, they had authority over the supervisory employees. This led to some conflicts. The workers demanded job security, having formed the cooperatives primarily to guarantee it, and "if business is dull, unemployed stockholders think it hard, that they cannot have work." "In dull times, it would be economy to work in a cheap man to do certain kinds of work while learning the trade, but it will hardly do to substitute the cheap man for a stockholder." An agent of the Stoneham Cooperative complained that the female operatives in particular were too "independent." "In the stitching room it is desirable to economize machinery, to have stitchers change off, doing one kind of work a part of the day, and something else at other times. If they are stockholders, young women object."<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, the foreman believed that they could not maintain discipline and obtain quality work without freedom to hire and fire. In the Stoneham Cooperative, where for a year no one supervised the shop floor at all (the agent managed the business end of the concern), the first attempt to hire a foreman precipitated a "heated discussion" as to who should have authority to hire and fire the help. The new shop foreman complained

that the rule requiring him to consult with the president of the board of directors before firing a worker interfered with his ability to manage the help. After considerable debate among the stockholders and directors, it was decided that the "man in charge of the shop" should have full charge of the work in all departments, and in regard to hiring and firing, should consult with the agent and in case of disagreement, the board of directors.<sup>45</sup>

In practice, the board of directors (composed of workers) played a direct supervisory role. A board decision of May 1873 put an end to card playing in the shop while production was going on. In May 1874, the president of the board was told to "see our black shank workman and tell him that unless he does better work, and gives his work better attention, they must find someone else in his place." In January 1875, the black shank workman was still giving the cooperators trouble, so one of the directors was appointed to "experiment with the black shank workman to get better work done in striping," which he proceeded to do, "with good results." At that time, the directors also voted that the "foreman be instructed to notify the pegger and channel machine operators to have better work done." In 1886, the state Bureau of Statistics of Labor reported that a slightly different system was in use at the Stoneham Cooperative, less protective of the workers' job tenure. At that time the agent had the right to discharge all help, except stockholders, whose case would go before the board of directors. Stockholding did not guarantee a man a job; he only held the job if he were "the right man to do a certain work," with "a better workman not a stockholder given preference."<sup>46</sup>

The American Cooperative Boot and Shoe Company, seeking to avoid some of the problems encountered at the pioneering Stoneham Cooperative, from its inception in 1882 gave the agent full authority to fire even a stockholder without a vote of the board of directors. The founders marketed stock in the cooperative on the grounds that "this was an investment only and not a claim to any other advantage." "Labor is regarded in this shop with an eye as singly to its economic value as in the most absolutely governed corporation." Not surprisingly, "management is very satisfied with this policy," and this conservative cooperative had no problem in obtaining credit. However, this removal of authority from the worker-owners to independent management divided the interest of labor and capital, whose unity was the hallmark of cooperation. Whereas in other Stoneham cooperatives, wages for the lasters were routinely set by the Lasters' Protective Union, and for the other workers, by an average of wages paid in Stoneham corporations generally, the setting of wages became an acrimonious issue in the American Cooperative. The lasters were not unionized, and in 1882 and again in 1885 the lasters informally organized to demand raises, which they won. In 1886 the operatives actually struck the American Cooperative, demanding weekly pay. Though some workers still held shares in the organization, the American Cooperative was now hardly cooperative in its day to day operation.<sup>47</sup>

The story of the cooperative movement in Stoneham, then, is one of exceptional success over a period of fifteen years, then gradual failure around 1890. Why Stoneham should happen to rise to such prominence as a center of cooperation is an intriguing question, but difficult to answer. Probably the success of the first effort, the Stoneham Cooperative, contributed to subsequent endeavors. The new cooperators drew on the experience of the original enterprise, through networks among laborers built up through years of working together. John Best, for instance, one of the founders of the Stoneham Cooperative and its agent for many years, was a well-known figure in the Stoneham labor movement, a leader in the Crispins and a supporter of shoeworkers' unions even after he opened his own factory; his advice was probably respected in the small community. It helped as well that the local newspaper, the *Independent*, was a firm supporter of labor in general and cooperation in particular. Naturally, the specific skills of the cooperators in managing their concerns paid off. Each appears to have started off with sufficient capital to survive some rough moments, and each paid close attention to the work being done on the shop floor. At least at the Stoneham Cooperative, the leaders were able to modify certain management policies to obtain better work without fundamentally abandoning their principals of cooperation. Their skills may not have resulted in the most perfectly democratic forms of worker control, but they generally succeeded in holding worker-run organizations together for several years in a ruthlessly competitive economy, no mean feat.

In the end, it was that competitive economy of the late nineteenth century which brought about the demise of the cooperatives in Stoneham. Given the severity of repeated depressions during the 1870s and 1880s, the cooperatives faced formidable obstacles. As Clare

Horner has pointed out, "Most societies were caught in a vicious circle. Starting without enough capital, the businesses remained marginal, forcing employees to accept low wages. As a result, members were unable to earn enough to increase their investment and provide more capital." In an era of cut-throat competition, they competed against large corporations with economies of scale. As working-class institutions, the cooperatives had a potential market to be tapped in the name of labor solidarity, but they could not undersell other retailers and still pay union wage scales. In some cases, cooperators were driven out of business by aggressive competitors who deliberately undersold on certain loss leader items in order to win loyal customers away from the cooperatives, who could hardly undertake such risky tactics. In general, the cooperatives remained isolated enclaves of collective idealism in a firmly entrenched capitalist economy. If specific conditions which dealt death blows to the Stoneham shoe cooperatives cannot be identified, the larger context — the failure of limited socialistic enterprise in a capitalist economy — is clear enough.<sup>48</sup>

## Life and Labor 1880 – 1915

While the producers' cooperatives were the most distinctive and successful challenge to the shoe manufacturers in Stoneham during the 1870s and 1880s, some continued their efforts to build trade unions in the local shoe industry during this period. At the national level, no movement emerged with the strength and coherence of the Knights of St. Crispin. The Knights of Labor, formed in the late 1870s with the considerable help of the fast-fading Crispins, attempted to organize workers of all industries. By the mid-1880s, the national leadership was committed to discouraging local strikes and settling disputes peacefully, even to the point of settling without recognition for a local union. The shoemakers' leaders tried to develop strong districts for their trade within the larger federation, but they often found themselves in dispute with the national Knights. In the meantime, the Lasters' Protective Union grew strong as an independent craft union. Often the Lasters and the Knights cooperated with and supported each other, but the skill-based division precluded industry-wide action.<sup>49</sup>

It is difficult to determine how strong these unions were in Stoneham. The Lasters' union had a local in Stoneham from 1882 on, met regularly in its newly remodeled quarters in the Spencer Building in Central Square for meetings and musical entertainments, and had almost total power to set wages in the local industry. The Knights of Labor, however, were not listed in the city directories, though a local in Wakefield was listed each year in the 1880s. When in 1884 a wage cut in a firmly anti-union company, Sanborn and Mann, precipitated a three-week strike, workers first put together an ad hoc organization, then struck, and only then decided to affiliate with the Knights. In the aftermath of the strike, the Knights remained strong in Stoneham for a few years, but by 1889, dissatisfaction with the union led Stoneham workers into a new Boot and Shoe Workers' Union which was more interested in

## T.H. Jones Factory



**T.H. Jones Factory, 1890.** T.H. Jones, located on Franklin Street near Main was the last and largest factory built in Stoneham. The building was 175 feet long and 50 feet wide, and with five full stories and a cellar could accommodate 500 employees. Continuous bands of windows provided a maximum amount of light and ventilation. In 1891, 275 employees produced fifty cases per day of "pebble, oil and glove grain and women's misses' and children's pegged, standard, standard screw and sewed polka, polish and button boots and shoes for the Southern and Western trade."

Thomas Henry Jones was born in Lancaster, Massachusetts in 1835. He came to Stoneham in 1850. Between 1850 and 1880 he worked for Allen Rowe and Son, one of Stoneham's oldest firms, and Sweetser, Battles, and Company. In 1880 he became manager and later a general partner in R.W. Emerson and Company. He bought out Emerson and Company and formed a partnership with H.H. Mawhinney and H.H. Seaver. The firm occupied the Tidd tannery buildings until 1890, when the new factory was built. S.H.S.



**T.H. Jones House in "Lincolnville".** After 1880, the blocks of Warren, Lyndon, Benton, Lincoln and Chestnut developed with attractive late Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Shingle Style houses. The majority of these houses were built for a new class of commuters as well as prosperous local merchants and managers. T.H. Jones' 1878 house was one of the first stylish houses in the Lincolnville area. The design of the building combines Second Empire and Queen Anne style features.

the special concerns of the militant shoemakers.<sup>50</sup>

The dispute of April and May 1884 sharply focused the strains shoe workers were experiencing and forcefully tested their solidarity. Sanborn and Mann announced that for the second time that year it would cut wages, bringing their rate well below the one paid in other local firms and "into competition with convict labor." Two hundred workers, including many women and workers from other factories, appeared at a mass meeting in the Grand Army of the Republic Hall. There they heard orations by A.A. Carleton of Lynn, John Best, now "one of our big-hearted manufacturers", and local labor leaders, and decided to form a network called the Citizens Protective Union. The next night, the Sanborn and Mann workers present decided to obey the orders of the new organization, and the women, inspired by C. Fannie Allyn, a local woman who had lectured nationally for the shoe assemblies of the Knights of Labor, voted to form their own union. They promptly enlisted the support of Lynn stitchers, who refused an effort by the Sanborn and Mann management to send shoes to that city to be stitched. A negotiating committee began to bargain with the company, and after four weeks, won a rollback of the wage cut. The *Independent* noted, "The Sanborn and Mann affair is over. The workingmen and women won. Organized effort, business tact, and an intelligent and determined attitude, united to bring about the above results."<sup>51</sup>

A week after the strike began, the Stoneham Assembly of the Knights of Labor held a meeting at which many members were initiated, most aroused by events at Sanborn and Mann. The women's group, no doubt at Fannie Allyn's urging, became the Ladies' Branch of the Knights of Labor. The Knights were going strong in August of that year, when the Ladies Assembly in Stoneham put on a reception for twenty-two Knights from Lynn. Early in 1889, however, the Stoneham workers concurred with other shoemakers in defecting from the Knights and forming a large union for shoe workers only. A mass meeting was called at Town Hall in March 1889 featuring as speakers George McNeill, a Boston union leader; E.A. Daly, General Secretary of the Lasters' Protective Union; Thomas Philips, an old Crispin and Knight and "the silver-tongued shoemaker of Philadelphia;" and Harry Skeffington, the tireless Philadelphian who was the primary organizer of the new union. The Boot and Shoe Workers' Union, which promised harmony and unity with the Lasters, was "received with great satisfaction by workers in and around Stoneham."<sup>52</sup>

Although Stoneham's shoe workers had found the organization to suit their needs, they faced pressures and changes from many directions as they entered the 1890s. These changes signaled the beginning of Stoneham's transformation from a small, homogeneous industrial village in the nineteenth century to a diverse suburban community in the twentieth. As the twentieth century opened, Stoneham was still economically dependent upon the shoe industry, but the cultural unity that made Stoneham a shoemaker's city began to break down under economic and social change.

One such change was the development of diversified industries which first supplemented and then replaced the shoe industry. The most important of these was the E.L. Patch Pharmaceutical Company, a manufacturer of drugs which set up business in 1889. Between 1889 and 1905, Stoneham acquired the American Glue Company, the Vera Chemical Company (a soap manufacturer), the Crouch Motor Company which made motor bicycles, and two automobile manufacturers, the Phelps and Videx companies.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time, the shoe industry began a slow decline in Stoneham as in all of New England. In 1885, there were 23 shoe companies listed in the city directory, in 1899, nine, and in 1905, four. A map laid out in 1909 shows only Patrick Cogan and Son, T.H. Jones, and Healey Brothers shoe company in the town, along with George Longmore's Heel Factory and the C.K. White Heel Factory. It is not clear just why all the factories disappeared, but several reasons probably contributed to the decline. The mid-1880s and early 1890s were years of severe depression across the country, and the Stoneham industry was hit hard. An editorial in the *Stoneham Independent* in 1889 reflected the uneasiness of the community during this period. Normally a strongly pro-labor paper, the *Independent* commented on the notorious Sanborn and Mann, "notwithstanding a few cranks compare this factory to a Castle Gardens, State Prison &c, we think we voice the sentiment of most of the intelligent portion of the community when we say we would like to have a half dozen more just such factories in town, for we don't know what would become of Stoneham should some two or three of the larger factories close up business. May Stoneham, what there is left of it, yet see better and brighter days."<sup>54</sup>

Around 1900, competition began to erode the shoe industry's profits, ultimately destroying the region's shoe economy. Some firms opened factories in northern New England, where labor was cheap, while other companies sprang up in the midwest, turning such cities as St. Louis into major shoemaking centers. Ironically, the very mechanical and entrepreneurial skills which contributed to the expansion of the Massachusetts shoe industry in the 1860s helped bring about its collapse. The same firms which had supplied New England manufacturers with machinery began to sell their product first in the Midwest and South and then to countries like Spain and Italy who used them to build up their own industries. Since Stoneham had traditionally specialized in stylish women's and children's shoes, a sort which the new manufacturing districts developed first and most successfully, the local industry was especially vulnerable.<sup>55</sup>

The turn of the century also saw changes in the population as a few members of new ethnic groups moved into the town. Compared to such towns as Lowell or Fall River, where French Canadian, Italians, Greeks, Russians and many other nationalities arrived between 1880 and 1910 to work in the textile mills, Stoneham never developed a large immigrant population. In large part, this was due to the limited number of unskilled jobs available in the shoe industry, although Lynn cer-

tainly had a variety of ethnic neighborhoods of its own. In Stoneham in 1895, there were 55 French Canadians, 35 Swedes, 8 Italians, 10 Greeks, and 5 Russians in addition to the 403 English and Scotch Canadians, 170 English and Scotch, 513 Irish natives, and 5,010 "Americans." Besides these local residents, the factories began to hire some immigrant workers who lived outside of town; for instance, about 50 Armenians were commuting in the 1890s from Malden and Woburn to work in the rubber shoe factory. After 1915 or so, the migration of second-generation Italians from Boston contributed to the growing ethnic diversity of Stoneham.<sup>56</sup>

The strain of depression in the shoe industry and the appearance of unfamiliar cultural groups came together in a telling incident of 1894, in which the Yankee and Irish shoemakers of Stoneham reacted with violence against Armenian workers brought in from out of town to break a strike. The A.E. Mann Company precipitated the strike by cutting the lasters' wages below union rates and below those paid by other local shoe factories. When the lasters walked out, the company hired workers from among the hard-pressed new immigrants in Malden who were willing to do the jobs at the low wages, with the help of an Irishman who had made an unsavory career for himself training strikebreakers in New Hampshire and Maine. On Tuesday, May 15, 1894, an angry mob of 1,000 Stoneham shoe workers and supporters attacked the outsiders with stones, bricks and bottles as they attempted to board the streetcar at the end of the day.

When he heard of the violence, company president Mann cut short a vacation and returned to negotiate with the lasters, agreeing within a day to a price list close to that originally demanded by the union. One last time as the century drew to a close, the shoemakers of Stoneham had asserted their dominance within their community. The *Independent* sighed with relief, "Everything O.K. — the Strike Declared Off at A.E. Mann and Co.'s Large Shoe Factory."<sup>57</sup>

Of course, everything was not really O.K. After 1900, the newspaper's earlier fears were realized as A.E. Mann and many other shoe factories closed up or left for other towns. More and more of the old shoe worker's families found employment in other industries, many of them moving away in search of work. What had been for almost a century a strong and lively shoeworkers' community was gradually replaced by a more diverse culture, one more like that of Boston. The arrival of automobiles and theaters, already apparent by 1915, opened communication in ways that the workers of 1870, with their circles of friendship based in shoeworkers' pubs and Central Square shops, could never imagine. Stoneham became a residential town, not an industrial one; a middle-class suburb, not a worker's community. Compared to other industrial towns like Haverhill or Lowell, which suffered severely with the flight of their shoe and textile industries, Stoneham was doing well in the mid-twentieth century, thanks to its proximity to Boston and to the new industrial arteries surrounding the city. However, when nineteenth-century Stoneham and its shoe industry faded away, a unique and memorable chapter in New England history closed.



Emerson Street Shoeworker's Houses ca. 1850-1860.



Tremont Street Shoemaker's House, ca. 1840. Simple details and gable roof characterize the mid-nineteenth century shoemaker's house.

## Cogan Shoe Factory Workers, 1890



New factories were added until the late 1890s. By 1891, there were 26 shoe-manufacturing firms operating in 15 factories and a number of allied industries. As Irish immigration increased, the ranks of shoemakers changed from English to Irish, and factory ownership reflected the shift as well. In 1891, William Stevens wrote that there were only a "few" firms left which had been in existence twenty years before.

Representative of the new group of factories and owners was Patrick Cogan and Son. Cogan arrived in the United States from County Monaghan, Ireland and came to Stoneham in 1851. His biography tells an often-repeated sequence of events:

He worked in the shoe factories of the town until 1878, when he began the manufacture of shoes on his own account in a small front room. Here, Mr. Cogan, assisted by his two sons Bernard H. and James, began with the making of twenty pairs of shoes per day . . . the business has every year shown an increase over the previous year until now (1891) about 100 hands are employed and about 600 pairs are manufactured per day . . . preparations are being made to build an addition to the new factory with the intention of doubling its capacity and turning out from 1000-1200 pairs per day.

Throughout his life, Patrick Cogan stayed in the family home on Tremont Street, among his Irish shoemaker neighbors. His sons, James and Bernard, built more fashionable homes on Elm and Flint Streets. In the early twentieth century, when the Hill and Tidd names were no longer connected with the companies they had built, Cogan's factory was still operating under the family name.

# Appendix

## Stoneham Population, 1765-1905

YEARS AND CENSUS.	Population
1765 (Prov.)	340
1776 (Prov.)	319
1790 (U.S.)	381
1800 (U.S.)	380
1810 (U.S.)	467
1820 (U.S.)	615
1830 (U.S.)	732
1840 (U.S.)	1,017
1850 (U.S.)	2,085
1855 (State)	2,518
1860 (U.S.)	3,206
1865 (State)	3,298
1870 (U.S.)	4,513
1875 (State)	4,984
1880 (U.S.)	4,890
1885 (State)	5,659
1890 (U.S.)	6,155
1895 (State)	6,284
1900 (U.S.)	6,197
1905 (State)	6,332

## Birthplaces of Stoneham Shoeworkers

	1850	1860	1870
Mass.	47 50%	51 35%	53 43%
N.H.	28 30%	46 31%	27 22%
Vermont	5 5%	5 3%	4 3%
Maine	6 6%	11 8%	9 7%
Ireland	2 2%	18 13%	14 11%
England	— —	1 1%	1 1%
Canada	2 2%	11 8%	13 11%
other	4 4%	1 1%	1 1%

Source: Samples from Federal Census  
(factory workers).

## Property Ownership in Stoneham 1850 - 1870

	1850	1860	1870
Manufacturers: n	8	10	9
% with property	50%	88%	100%
average holding - propertied	\$4,625	\$6,438	\$10,459
average holding - all	\$2,313	\$5,150	\$10,459
Cutters: n	5	11	12
% with property	20%	73%	75%
average holding - propertied	\$2,000	\$1,883	\$ 1,922
average holding - all	\$ 400	\$1,370	\$ 1,442

Cordwainers/shoemakers or works in shoe factory: n	93	144	116
% with property	26%	47%	28%
average holding - propertied	\$1,164	\$1,213	\$ 1,769
average holding - all	\$ 297	\$ 564	\$ 503

Source: Samples from Federal Census

## Housing Patterns in Stoneham 1850 - 1870

	1850		1860		1870	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Living with wife and/or children	50	53%	56	39%	53	43%
Living with parents	10	11%	13	9%	16	13%
Boarding with non-kin	19	20%	41	28%	21	17%
Boardinghouse residents	11	12%	31	22%	21	17%
other or unknown	4	4%	3	2%	11	9%
n	94		144		122	

Source: Samples from Federal Census  
(factory workers).

## Shoe Production in Stoneham 1833 - 1880

Year	Male employees	Female employees	Total employees	Pairs of shoes
1833	250	120	370	300,000
1837	287	180	467	380,000
1845	405	448	853	429,400
1855	1106	651	1757	1,392,000
1860	752	274	1026	1,641,558
1870	724	374	1098	2,083,320
1880	389	195	584	1,001,405

Sources: [Louis McLane], *Documents Relative to the Manufactures in the United States* (1833)

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